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VOLUME 15



# MENASSEH BEN ISRAEL AND HIS WORLD

EDITED BY

YOSEF KAPLAN, HENRY MÉCHOULAN  
AND RICHARD H. POPKIN



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## INTRODUCTION

RICHARD H. POPKIN

The conference on “Menasseh ben Israel and his world” grew out of a discussion at the Dutch Jewish History conference in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in December 1982. Professor Daniel Swetchinski of the University of Arizona had presented a paper on Menasseh ben Israel which was very controversial and which aroused and stimulated much scholarly response. We felt that in view of the many new findings about Menasseh and his relations with various Christian and Jewish figures in Holland, England, Sweden, France and elsewhere, we ought to try to arrange a conference just about Menasseh and his world in order to re-evaluate the picture given of his various contributions. Many letters had been found in new sources, new details about his role in the history of Hebrew printing, in explicating Jewish doctrines, in interpreting Jewish messianism, in the Christian millenarian worlds in Holland and England, in his relation with Dutch philo-Semitic Christians and English chiliasts.

If we could bring together people working on different aspects of Menasseh’s thought and activities, we might be better able to assess his special role in seventeenth-century Jewish and Christian activities. Professors Jonathan Israel, Henry Méchoulan, Yosef Kaplan, David Katz and I discussed the possibilities of a conference, and I broached the matter with Professor Yehuda Elkana, the director of the Van Leer Jerusalem Foundation. He readily agreed to provide the finances and the facilities, if we would provide the program. A committee of Méchoulan, Kaplan, Katz and myself drew up a list of possible participants from Europe, America and Israel, including experts in European intellectual, political and economic history, and experts on various aspects of Jewish history, especially of the Sephardic world of the seventeenth century. The generosity of the Van Leer Jerusalem Foundation enabled us to bring together a quite diverse group of scholars who were able to present Menasseh in his many worlds, as a popular Jewish preacher and publisher, as a point of contact for the Jewish and Christian worlds, especially in Holland and England, as an intriguing actor in the messianic and millenarian dramas of the time, and as a thinker in his own right.

We discussed Menasseh ben Israel in terms of Portuguese expectations,

Scottish millenarianism, various Dutch movements, various English thinkers and politicians, in terms of the Jewish context of his works, and in terms of his influences. Most of the papers were available before the meetings, so that more time was available for discussion. We moved at a leisurely pace, so that we could discuss issues formally at regular sessions, and informally in smaller groups. The discussions were lively, often forceful and dramatic, and very often very informative. Unfortunately we could not capture them to include in this volume, but some are reflected in the final versions of the papers. Some strong differences of opinion and interpretation were advanced, which reflect different perspectives, and different evaluations of the materials.

At the end of the conference an editorial committee was appointed to publish the proceedings of the conference, consisting of two Israeli scholars, Amos Funkenstein of Tel Aviv University and Yosef Kaplan of the Hebrew University, and Henry Méchoulán and myself representing Europe and America. We received all of the papers here included. Three of the participants, Mordecai Feingold, James Jacob and Gérard Nahon, did not submit their papers for publication.

It was felt that we would not try to make the papers conform in mode or style, and would publish them as prepared by the authors, except for minor editorial changes. The result, we feel, gives a broad picture of the emerging picture of Menasseh ben Israel as a significant figure in seventeenth-century intellectual, political and economic affairs, and will lead to better appreciating what he was trying to accomplish and what he did accomplish.

A further by-product has been the forging of new research programs by sub-groups of the participants. Two of the Dutch participants, Professor Jan van den Berg and Dr. Ernestine G.E. van der Wall, have edited a collection of papers and documents on Jewish-Christian relations in Holland and England in the seventeenth century (which has just appeared in *International Archives of the History of Ideas Series*, published by Kluwer); a conference on seventeenth-century millenarianism took place in Wolfenbüttel in September 1987, and a conference on Menasseh's English acquaintance, Henry More, took place at Christ's College, Cambridge right afterwards. Yosef Kaplan and I are starting to prepare a collective volume on the Sephardic community of Amsterdam. New documents about Menasseh are being published by Dr. E. van der Wall, Dr. A.K. Offenbergh, Prof. David Katz and myself (including Menasseh's previously unknown writing on the kabbalah). A new edition of Menasseh's *The Hope of Israel* has just been published by Henry Méchoulán and Gérard Nahon (with an essay on the translator, Moses Wall, by myself).

Hopefully, all of this will lead to a realization that no matter how

strange, or unusual his activities were, from a traditional Jewish perspective, he did play a major role in seventeenth-century European (and even American) history. The ongoing effects of this conference on Menasseh ben Israel will be of importance to scholars of seventeenth century Jewish and Christian history.

We are most grateful to the Van Leer Jerusalem Foundation, to Professor Yehuda Elkana and his excellent staff, and to the Institute for the History and Philosophy of Sciences and Ideas at Tel Aviv University, for making the conference possible, for their hospitality. We also want to express our appreciation to E.J. Brill Publishers, and their editor, Elisabeth Erdman-Visser, for their willingness to publish the proceedings of the conference.



## A GENERATION OF PROGRESS IN THE HISTORICAL STUDY OF DUTCH SEPHARDIC JEWRY

YOSEF KAPLAN

The study of Sephardic Jewry in Holland during the seventeenth century has known a remarkable awakening in the past generation. Scholars in various countries have arisen and made signal contributions to the study of the history of the Portuguese community in the Dutch Republic, particularly in Amsterdam, in its heyday. In the early 1960s, I.S. Révah began making systematic use of the manuscripts in the Ets Haim Library and also of the archival material of the Portuguese community in Amsterdam. Since the publication of his pioneering works on the intellectual ferment during the period of Spinoza, extensive research has been done, illustrating the special character of Sephardic Jewry from various perspectives.

Publication of the catalogue of the archive of the Portuguese community in Amsterdam by W.Chr. Pieterse in 1964 showed historians the wealth of the seventeenth and eighteenth century documents which had been preserved from that community. These documents have been deposited in the Amsterdam Municipal Archive, one of the best of its kind in the entire world, whose many collections contain fascinating and valuable information on Jewish history. Among the early studies published since the organization of the archive of the Portuguese community and the publication of its catalogue, one should mention the studies by W.Chr. Pieterse herself. She has investigated the reliability of one of the most important literary and historiographical sources regarding the Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam, the *Triumpho del Gobierno Popular* by the poet Daniel Levi de Barrios. Pieterse's study, which was published in 1968, has become a basic work for all students of the history of Sephardic Jewry in Holland. Two years afterwards she published the first register of the cemetery of that community in Ouderkerk, a unique and unusual document, which has still not yet been fully analyzed by social historians. Such study would produce fascinating results regarding the mentalité of the Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam.

The year 1967 saw the first appearance of *Studia Rosenthaliana*, published by the Rosenthaliana Library in Amsterdam. From then until the present, this journal has published dozens of articles about the history of Dutch



Jewry and their culture, and, among these, studies of the Golden Age of Sephardic Jewry in Holland occupy a central place. E.M. Koen and W.Chr. Pieterse have begun the systematic publication of the *Notarial Records in Amsterdam Relating to the Portuguese Jews*, which, starting from the first issue of this journal, have enriched our knowledge of the wide-ranging economic activity of the first generation of Portuguese Jews in Amsterdam, of their network of commercial and international ties, and of the central part they played in trade between Holland and Portugal and its colonies.

The diligent labors of L. Fuks and R.G. Fuks-Mansfeld have given us two splendid volumes, published by E.J. Brill in 1973-1975, containing the catalogues of the *Hebrew and Jewish Manuscripts in Amsterdam Public Collections*. The first volume is devoted to the Rosenthaliana Library, and the second describes the riches of the Ets Haim Library of the Portuguese Jewish community of Amsterdam. These two collections contain a treasure trove of writing by members of that community and by members of the entire Sephardic diaspora, written in Hebrew, Spanish, Portuguese, Latin, Dutch, and other languages. These catalogues facilitate the work of students of the heritage of Sephardic Jewry and grant them access to sources which had hitherto been forgotten, unknown, or only vaguely known. Recently L. Fuks and R.G. Fuks-Mansfeld have begun a new series, also published by E.J. Brill, on *Hebrew Typography in the Northern Netherlands*, which contains a detailed bibliographical description of the books printed in Hebrew characters (and also other Jewish books) which were produced between 1585 and 1815. The first two volumes, published in 1984-1987, contain, among other things, valuable descriptions of the books published in Portuguese Jewish printing houses such as those of Menasseh ben Israel, Daniel de Fonseca, Immanuel Benveniste, Joseph and Immanuel Athias, David de Castro Tartas, and Abraham Mendes Coitinho. These publications now permit a systematic study of the culture and wide-ranging creative life of the Sephardic Jews of Holland, and there can be no doubt that traces of these publications are notable in the special momentum which research in this field has manifested in the past few years.

The establishment of the Institute for Research on Dutch Jewry at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, under the energetic initiative of J. Michman, has encouraged the scholarly activity of Israeli researchers from various universities, who have begun to concentrate on the history and culture of Dutch Jewry. Since 1975 five volumes of *Studies on the History of Dutch Jewry* have appeared in Hebrew as well as two English volumes of the Proceedings of the Second and Fourth International Congresses on the History of Dutch Jewry, which took place in Israel in 1982 and 1986. In both of these collections, studies on the Portuguese Jews of Holland in the seventeenth century occupy a major place.

The Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem has organized two large and impressive exhibitions, in 1975 and in 1980, devoted to the subject of the Portuguese community in Amsterdam in the seventeenth century and to Treasures from the Ets Haim/Livraria Montezinos Library, which aroused great interest among scholars, students, and in the general public.

The subject of the Sephardic diaspora in western Europe and in the New World, especially in the Portuguese Jewish center in the Dutch Republic, has begun to occupy a permanent place in the curriculum of the history departments of Israeli universities. The departments of Jewish Thought and Hebrew Literature have also shown increased interest in the philosophical and literary works of members of the Portuguese community in Amsterdam.

One must not forget the important contributions of many scholars, professional historians and tireless researchers, who, since the late nineteenth century, have written pioneering studies on the history of the Portuguese Jews in Holland, their culture, their intellectual and artistic creations, and the character of their society. Authors such as H.J. Koenen, A.M. Vaz Dias, S. Seeligmann, J. d'Ancona, I. Maarsen, J.G. van Dillen, H. Bruggmans, and others have laid the foundations for systematic research on these topics. One must not ignore the weight of H.I. Bloom in the study of the history of the economy of the Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For understanding the intellectual world of the New Christians from Spain and Portugal who returned to Judaism in Amsterdam during the seventeenth century, the contribution of C. Gebhardt and J.A. van Praag was decisive. Similarly, in 1949 J. Meijer published the *Remonstrantie* of H. Grotius and other documents concerning the political and juridical status of the Jews in Holland, and almost at the same time he published the first two parts of the *Encyclopaedia Sefardica Neerlandica*, a basic and highly useful work, which, regrettably, has never been completed. As early as 1962 J. van den Berg published a book of primary importance on the intellectual and theological relations between Jews and Christians in Holland in the seventeenth century.

There can be no doubt that I.S. Révah gave the greatest impetus to the study of the intellectual world of the Portuguese community in Amsterdam. His many articles have enriched our knowledge of the da Costa, Spinoza, Prado, and Ribera affairs, of thinkers and writers in the community, and of the family history and genealogy of many of its members. His research into the trials of the Inquisition in Spain and Portugal have proven how important and central these documents are for the understanding of the social and intellectual history of the members of the Sephardic diaspora in the early modern period.

Research on Portuguese Jewry in Holland has expanded and grown richer in the past years in every area. Not only has our knowledge of the subject increased, but also our general, interdisciplinary view of the position and importance of that branch of Jewry in the history of the seventeenth century has been greatly sharpened. In this limited space we cannot mention all the research and writing in this area which has been done in the past few years, but we shall merely offer a general and brief overview, which will relate only to a few of the central contributions.

Two historians have drawn a rich and vivid picture of the economic and social history of the Portuguese Jews in the seventeenth century. The first is J.I. Israel, who has published fascinating studies on the economic activity of the Portuguese Jews in seventeenth-century Holland and on their political importance there. Some of this work has been summed up in his *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism 1550-1750* (Oxford, 1985). The second scholar is D.M. Swetchinsky, who wrote an excellent doctoral dissertation on *The Portuguese Jewish Merchants of Seventeenth Century Amsterdam: A Social Profile* (Brandeis University, 1980).

Y.H. Yerushalmi's important work, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto* (New York and London, 1971), though it does not deal particularly with the Sephardic Jewish center in Holland, has made a substantial contribution to our knowledge of the intellectual world of the Sephardic diaspora in the seventeenth century in general, and it has inspired intellectual historians of the Portuguese Jews in Amsterdam.

H.P. Salomon has rescued many manuscripts from oblivion, shedding light on various aspects of the New Christians in Portugal and the route some of them took to Judaism in Amsterdam. His important articles on the Pinto family and on the family of Menasseh ben Israel, as well as his books on the first Portuguese Jews in Amsterdam (1983), on David Abenatar Melo (1982), and his monumental work on R. Saul Levi Mortera, which was only published recently, in 1988, are major contributions to the systematic study of the Sephardic Jewry in Holland in the seventeenth century.

In his fascinating studies, R.H. Popkin has pointed out the intellectual contexts and spiritual affinities between some of the central figures of Portuguese Jewry in Amsterdam and European thought in the early modern period. His *Isaac la Peyrère (1596-1676). His Life, Work and Influence* (Leiden, 1987) brings out the central importance of La Peyrère for understanding the intellectual ferment of the Sephardic Jews of Amsterdam in the seventeenth century and on his influence on Spinoza. Popkin has also written about the connections between Christian Millenarianism and Jewish Messianism in the seventeenth century, on the relation between Spinoza and the Quakers, and he has noted the influence of Richard Simon on a certain

circle of Portuguese Jews in Amsterdam, who leaned towards Karaism in the early eighteenth century.

H. Méchoulán has published many studies on the intellectual world of the Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam. Following J.A. van Praag and I.S. Révah, he has continued to explore the affinity between the conversos who returned to Judaism and the Iberian intellectual heritage. Méchoulán has written a detailed study of the thought of Abraham Pereyra and his work, *La Certeza del Camino* in his work, *Hispanidad y Judaismo en Tiempos de Espinoza* (Salamanca, 1987). In 1979 he published, in collaboration with G. Nahon, a French translation of the work of Menasseh ben Israel, *The Hope of Israel* with an introduction and many notes. This work has also been published in Spanish and English.

G. Nahon, as a result of his comprehensive studies of the New Christians and Sephardic Jews in France, has been able to make a detailed study of the relations between the Portuguese in France and the Jewish community of Amsterdam in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; similarly, he has published a number of pioneering works on the connections between the Portuguese community of Amsterdam and the Sephardic Jewish community in the Land of Israel during the eighteenth century.

B.N. Teensma published several works which shed light on the Lusitan cultural background of Sephardic Jewry in Amsterdam. Especially important is his contribution to the study of the Portuguese language used by Amsterdam's Jews in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

R. Cohen made important strides in the demographic study of Dutch Jewry and introduced us to the world of Sephardic Jews in the Dutch colonies of the New World.

I myself have written a study of Isaac Orobio de Castro (published in Hebrew in 1982 and in English in 1989), which deals with many topics in the intellectual and cultural world of the Portuguese Jews in Amsterdam at the height of their vitality. I have also published various articles on the social, institutional, and intellectual history of the Portuguese community in Amsterdam during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, on the social functions of the Herem within it, on its relations to the Sabbatean movement, on the activity of its rabbis, on its relation to the Ashkenazic world, and on the phenomenon of "Karaism" within it.

Finally, one must not forget the important bibliographical works of A. Offenberg, on Jacob Judah Leon Templo, for example, and the articles of J. Michman on Moses Zacut and the fine and definitive work of D. Pagis on baroque Hebrew poetry in Holland and Italy, published in Jerusalem in 1986 just a few weeks before his untimely death.

The most recent research on seventeenth-century English Jewry, especially D. Katz's studies, have added greatly to our knowledge of Menasseh

ben Israel's activities on behalf of the Jews' readmission to England, and of his many contacts with English millenarians. E. van der Wall's encompassing work on Peter Serrarius showed us the extent to which the study of millenarianism in Western Europe can shed light on the spiritual ties between Jews and Christians in Holland during this period.

However, as shown by the papers given at the congress on Menasseh ben Israel and his period, which are published in this collection, fascinating events in the history of the Portuguese Jews of Holland are often clarified by historians from other fields, and especially by the interdisciplinary encounter of scholars from different disciplines. Hence everyone involved in the area must encourage and initiate such contacts, as much as possible.

The history of Portuguese Jewry in Holland is still being written, and the talents and energies shown in some of the doctoral dissertations now being produced guarantee that research in this fertile and vital area will retain its vigor in the following generation as well.

# THE JEWISH DIMENSION OF THE SCOTTISH APOCALYPSE: CLIMATE, COVENANT AND WORLD RENEWAL

ARTHUR H. WILLIAMSON

During the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries Scottish thinkers sought to find meaning in their national experience in terms which exploded the traditional view of their country as a seat of barbarity and primitivism. Many responded to this challenge by discovering a special role for Scotland in what they conceived to be the latter days of the world, and in so doing they found an increasingly significant connection between themselves and the Jews. Whether concentrating on the analogous position of the Jews as God's chosen people with the now latterly covenanted Scots, or interpreting sacred prophecy to give the Jews (or those who would convert to Christianity) a telling role in these latter days, Scottish thinkers agreed that the nation of Israel would prove surprisingly relevant to their own future and to the meaning of their culture.

## *Introductory: Scotland and the Fatality of Geography*

“Thay auctoris is na worth that sayis, all peple far fra the sonne ar barbour and miserable”\*. So declared John Bellenden's translation of Hector Boece's *Scotorum Historiae* in 1536, both works being of the greatest intellectual significance for sixteenth-century Scotland. “Na region in the world” proved so blasted “be distance fra the sonne” that it could not sustain its inhabitants in health, culture, and virtue. All three merely required the right mix of temperance and wisdom, and Boece's study was intended to show how Scottish history, in the face of the continuous threat of English corruption, had effectively embodied them over a truly immense stretch of time. Despite the *Historia*'s evident sanction of baronial revolution, King James V sponsored its translation which eventually appeared in print under royal authority. A touchstone for virtually every Scottish intellectual throughout the century, irrespective of his religion or politics, the *Historia*'s importance virtually defies exaggeration<sup>1</sup>.

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\* For those unfamiliar with Scots, the line may be “translated” as: Those authors are of no worth who say that all people far from the sun are barbarous and miserable.

<sup>1</sup> Hector Boece, *Heir beginnis the hystory and croniklis of Scotland*, trans. by John Bellenden

The work's success resulted from more than simply its being the first history of the Scots more or less in keeping with contemporaneous humanist models. For among other things it demonstrated or purported to demonstrate what common wisdom denied: a northern culture and civilization sustained through political virtue. Traditionally, from both biblical and classical sources, the north was pictured as quintessentially the place of the primitive, the bestial, the satanic, and it is truly remarkable how deeply this assumption reached into European consciousness. The prophet Ezekiel had warned of the armies of Gog coming out of the north in the latter days of the world, while Aristotle had spoken of the northern peoples as less intelligent than those of the south, more given to impulse than reflection. The authoritative work on northern Europe, Olaus Magnus' *Historia Gentibus Septentrionalibus* (Rome, 1555), portrayed at length the paganism and witchcraft of the peoples of that region and flatly stated that the devil had his seat there, mocking the inhabitants "with unspeakable delusions". In contrast, noted Jean Bodin, the south did not so suffer. The Arabs and Moors had found evil demons to be "rare or non-existent . . . either on account of the abundance of light from which they are thought to flee, or on account of the rarity of air which cannot sustain them". The Edinburgh physician Patrick Anderson thought the northern peoples "barbarously simple" and apparently understood the great outburst of Scottish witchcraft in the 1590s within such socio-climatological terms. Even the jurist Thomas Craig, one of the most articulate defenders of Scotland's legal and cultural autonomy, agreed that barbarism and superficial Christianity characterized the far north – notably Greenland, Iceland, and Finland – countries "full of apparitions, ghosts, hobgoblins, and fairies". The association of devilry with the north had of course long formed part of European literary tradition: in the friar's tale, Chaucer could speak of the devil dwelling "fer in the north countree"; a specifically northern wind filled Archimago's wings in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*; Milton spoke of dancing "with Lapland witches, while the labouring moon/Eclipses at their charms". Even the radical John Webster during the English Revolution dissociated his critique of the universities from northern barbarism and cold stupidity. Both John Mair and Thomas Craig, two of the finest minds in sixteenth-century Europe, felt the need to respond at

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(Edinburgh, 1540(?)), sigs. C5v and D2r. Cf. Hector Boece, *Scotorum Historiae a prima gentis origine, cum aliarum & rerum & gentium illustratione non vulgari*. . . (Paris, 1527), fols. xvi.62, xix.62: "Haud itaque imperitis illis atque arrogantibus sermonibus lacerandos existiment quum aversos a Sole ut extreme miseros ac barbaros ludibrio habent".

"Nulla enim regio adeo aversa a Sole infeocunditatis sterilitatisque damnata est, quin usus humanos omnibus abunde per diviniam Providentiam cuncta suppedientur: si sit modo qui uti sciat".

surprising length to St. Jerome's troublesome remark about seeing Scots practising cannibalism. The great commonplace inevitably informed all political and religious controversy between Scotland and England<sup>2</sup>.

Boece had thus confronted an almost universal predisposition anchored by the weight of truly massive tradition. The problem created by it in no way lessened with the Reformation, for such geo-political prejudice obviously worked to the disadvantage of northern (and Protestant) princes – as Roman Catholic controversialists quickly recognized. Poetry celebrating the accession of James I of Britain to the southern crown pictured the new king as a great exception to the old proverb that all evil proceeded from the north. Within this context it is easy to see why Paul Grebner's prophecy about the achievements of a great northern monarch at the end of days was gratefully received by the Elizabethan court and that its influence was felt throughout the seventeenth century. Nor is it surprising that the Scottish scholar and poet James Maxwell undertook a reply on this issue in a work "touching the Seate of Sathan" in which he proved

"against the Romaine doctors by Scripture and nature, by theologie and astrologie, by philosophie and history, that the north is absolutely the most divine eminent and excellent, the very seate of God and not of Sathan, and the chief recepticle of his Church . . ."<sup>3</sup>.

And well he might, for religious ritual itself had posited the north as the "region of the heathens". The traditional posture of the priest reading the gospel at Mass was facing the north – addressing the imaginary heathen.

<sup>2</sup> Ezekiel 38, 39; Aristotle, *Politics* VII.vii.1327b-1328a; Olaus Magnus, *Historia Gentibus Septentrionalibus*, trans. by Bulstrode Whitelocke as *A Compendious History of the Goths, Swedes & Vandals, and Other Northern Nations* (London, 1658), p. 51; Jean Bodin, *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History*, trans. by Beatrice Reynolds (New York, 1945), p. 118; National Library of Scotland: Advocates MSS, Hist. 56/35.5.3, vol. III, fol. 238a-b; Thomas Craig, *Scotland's Sovereignty Asserted*, trans. by George Ridpath (Edinburgh, 1695; from ms originally entitled *De Homino* and written about 1603), pp. 121, 359; Chaucer, D.1413; Spenser I.iii.19; Milton, *Paradise Lost*, II.665; cf. *Areopagitica* (Northbrook, 1951), p. 4; John Webster, *Academiarum Examen* (London, 1653), sig. A3r-v; John Mair (Major), *History of Greater Britain*, trans. by A. Constable and A. Mackay, *Scottish History Society* 10 (Edinburgh, 1892), pp. 44-45 (cf. pp. 32, 40-41, 277); Craig, *De Unione Regnorum Britanniae*, trans. by C.S. Terry, *Scottish History Society* 60 (Edinburgh, 1909), pp. 383-390. Regarding climate and politico-religious tensions between Scotland and England, see for example Samuel Rutherford, *A Survey of the Spiritual Antichrist, opening the Secrets of Familisme and Antinomianisme*. . . (London, 1648), sig. A3r.

<sup>3</sup> *Northern Poems congratulating the Kings Majesties entrance to the Crowne* (London, 1604): "Al evill from the North saith proverbe olde,/ But we may say, the North sends most good,/ Our gracious King with offspring manifold,/ From thence derives his stocke and royall bloud./ Let Boreas blastes to others evill bring,/ All good to us that sends us such a king?". Regarding Grebner, see Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London, 1971), pp. 468, 488; B.S. Capp, *English Almanacs, 1500-1800* (New York, 1979), pp. 168, 170, 177, 178; James Maxwell, *A New Eight-fold Probation of the Church of Englands divine Constitution*. . . (London, 1717), sig. B2r.



Still less surprising, Counter-Reformation literature greeted the entry of Gustavus Adolphus into the Thirty Years War with thoroughly nasty caricatures of savage Livonians, Laps, and Scots sweeping down from the north to rape and pillage<sup>4</sup>.

By the later sixteenth century, however, intellectual structures had developed which, among much else, would allow Scots to respond to this kind of concern in new ways. Reformers everywhere had become increasingly convinced that their revolt against Rome enacted many of the great events prophesied by scripture for the latter days of the world. Human experience, it seemed, articulated a vast, sacred drama now in its climactic, decisive stages. Human destiny stood on the verge of self-realization. The Judaeo-Christian apocalypse thus became central to the European intellect to an extent unprecedented since the intertestamental period. As is now widely recognized by modern scholars, the rediscovery of eschatology sprang from anything but obscurantist impulses and had anything but obscurantist consequences. To the pre-modern world, lacking history and social science, prophecy constituted the only dynamic, the only means by which Europeans could imagine change in time as at once qualitative and meaningful. Ironically, this deeply religious idea would prove a crucial catalyst in the creation of secular modes of explanation and, at least for the anglophone cultures, in the creation of liberal and democratic values<sup>5</sup>. For it quite literally validated the saeculum by imagining a divine programmatic as immanent within it; thereby men could speak not only of a new heaven and a new earth, but could also look to new agencies to ap-

<sup>4</sup> Reprinted in Richard S. Dunn, *The Age of the Religious Wars, 1559-1689* (New York, 1970), p. 74. I am most grateful to Professor Gordon Donaldson for alerting me to the specifically northern character of heathenism implied by traditional Catholic ritual.

<sup>5</sup> The following works highlight a now extensive literature on the subject concerning the anglophone cultures alone: J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, 1975); William Haller, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation* (London, 1967); William M. Lamont, *Godly Rule: Politics and Religion, 1603-60* (London, 1969); Peter Toon, ed., *Puritans, the Millennium, and the Future of Israel: Puritan Eschatology, 1600-1660* (Cambridge, 1970); B.W. Ball, *A Great Expectation: Eschatological Thought in English Protestantism to 1660* (Leiden, 1975); K.R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530-1645* (Oxford, 1979); Richard Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse: Sixteenth Century Apocalypticism, Millenarianism, and the English Reformation: from John Bale to John Foxe and Thomas Brightman* (Oxford, 1978); Paul Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War* (Toronto, 1978); A.H. Williamson, *Scottish National Consciousness in the Age of James VI: the Apocalypse, the Union, and the Shaping of Scotland's Public Culture* (Edinburgh, 1979); David S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England, 1603-1655* (Oxford, 1982); B.S. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men: A Study in Seventeenth Century English Millenarianism* (Totowa, 1972); N.O. Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England* (New Haven, 1977); E.L. Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role* (Chicago, 1968); F.A. Yates, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1972); Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (New Haven, 1975); C.A. Patrides and J. Wittreich, eds., *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature* (Ithaca, 1984).

pear through which vast changes might be achieved. In the latter days, men might reasonably anticipate new realms, new powers, and extraordinary events completely at odds with the traditional verities. The recent discovery of the New World – itself delayed until the latter days – might well suggest a drastic re-ordering of authority no less than of perspective. Seen within an apocalyptic process men might more plausibly view Scotland – or more often Britain – as crucial to the course of sacred history. The Scottish statesman and poet, Sir William Alexander of Menstrie, found it altogether persuasive that the great empires of the past – Assyrian, Persian, Greek, Roman – might be replaced by northern (and indeed British) power and civilization. In painfully didactic verses he explained

“For nations once which strangers were to fame,  
On whom (as Monsters) civill lands did gaze;  
Those who in scorne did them barbarians name,  
Doe now farre passe in all which merits praise:  
Thus glories Throne is made the seate of shame,  
Who were obscure, doe honour highest raise.  
‘Nought constant is below, no, not true worth,  
‘It melted South, and freezes in the North.

\* \* \*

As temporall power nere to the hottest pole,  
At first being sprung, then spred to others parts,  
One state ov’r all did to the starres extoll,  
By morall vertues and by martiall arts,  
Till colder climats did that heat controll,  
Both showing stronger hands and stouter hearts,  
Slaves libertie, Lords bondage did begin”<sup>6</sup>.

The New World too held a special place within the culminating events of the Last Days, for the spread of the Gospel was surely a prerequisite in the working out of human destiny<sup>7</sup>. But far more than that, Alexander found it conceivable that the New World might supplant the Old, that a pure America might redeem a hardened and corrupted Europe.

“From offering Grace no storm the Word can stay,  
Ere judgement come to those who will receive,  
In this last age Time doth new worlds display;  
That Christ a Church over all the earth may have,  
His righteousness shall barbarous Realms array,  
If their first love more civill Lands will leave,  
*America to Europe* may succeed,  
God may of stones raise up to *Abram* seed”<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> *The Poetical Work of Sir William Alexander, Earl of Stirling*, ed. by L.E. Kastner and H.B. Charlton (Edinburgh, 1921, 1929), Scottish Text Society, N.S. 11, 24, II, p. 48.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

Surely a startling suggestion for the early years of the seventeenth century, it is a measure of the conceptual flexibility which an apocalyptic perspective could make possible. Alexander confronted Boece's problem by looking to the future rather than to the past.

Though the two were by no means incompatible, Scottish apocalypticism did not depend upon the insights of Scottish historiography. Scots could look to the future without reference to ancient Scottish virtue. But the more they looked to current and future events independently of their past, the more preoccupied they became at once both with ancient Israel and with the future of Israel in the latter days. If Scots instituted their faith and then joined with others to establish Christ's kingdom through a series of massive religio-legislative enactments similar to that of Moses on Mt. Sinai, the significance of the Hebrew model is evident enough. The deepening concern with the idea of Scotland as a covenanted nation after 1581 of course gave the Jewish experience especially direct relevance to what it meant to be a Scot<sup>9</sup>. However, by the early years of the seventeenth century, a number of highly influential Scotsmen became persuaded that the Scottish people were not simply the heirs of the Jews, but their future partners as well. The Jews would embrace Christianity, now reformed and purged of its medieval corruptions, and their conversion promised far more than a swelling of the ranks of the faithful and a special vindication of the faith. For following their conversion, itself a major event prophesied in scripture to take place in the latter days, the Christian Jews might well play a central role in the fulfillment of human destiny: notably in the destruction of those great institutionalized agencies of evil, the historical antichrists identified as the Papacy and the Turkish Empire, in the spreading of the Gospel to all corners of the earth, and in the re-establishment of a powerful Jewish state in Palestine. These cataclysmic events would culminate, after an unspecified time, in the Last Judgement in which the apotheosis of the true church and the retribution of evil, both source and members, would take place. Both Scot and Jew might find themselves engaged in a great common cause which articulated the programmatic underlying history and which gave ultimate meaning to the human experience. Within the great alterations of the last perilous and yet exhilarating times, Scotland might well escape the fatality of geography, and, curiously enough, in a number of ways all this seemed to involve the Jews.

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<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of these mechanisms and how the Scots developed them, see my *Scottish National Consciousness*.

*The Union of Crowns: Britain and the Jews*

Belief in the prophesied conversion of the Jews before the end of time appeared early in the anglophone Reformation. John Bale asserted the doctrine in *The Image of Both Churches*, written between 1540 and 1543. "Not for nothing hath God given so much knowledge in the Hebrew tongue". Nevertheless, any philo-Semitism was qualified by his hostility to the Talmud and by his occasional conflation of the "conversion of the Jews" simply with the creation of reformed congregations<sup>10</sup>. Within a few decades this sort of conflation would produce quite striking, if not bizarre conclusions as concepts of national election entered into English self-consciousness, but, for Bale and the great Anglo-Scottish reformers, Jewish conversion assumed more modest significance. The Reformed faith did eliminate the shrines of "little" St. Hugh of Lincoln and St. William of Norwich which had institutionalized anti-Semitism as an integral feature of medieval popular piety, but the fanciful horror stories associated with them remained current. Even as humane and tolerant a man as John Foxe duly recounted the crucifixion of English Christian children during the middle ages<sup>11</sup>. John Knox found the Spaniards to be at once the spiritual heirs of the Jews in their persecution of Christ's faith as well as their literal descendants – "for the Jews they are, as histories do witnesse, and they themselves confesse"<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> John Bale, *Select Works*, ed. by H. Christmas, Parker Society (Cambridge, 1849), pp. 341, 335, 479. "Not for nothing hath God given so much knowledge in the Hebrew tongue. The Jews must be sealed with the word of verity: they must have the sure sign of faith: they must know and confess Christ, whom God afore promised by the prophets, that the twelve thousand of every tribe may be sealed unto salvation. For that time must the antichrists cease".

Bauchham, *op. cit.*, pp. 216, 226-227; Firth, *op. cit.*, pp. 43, 152, 170-171.

<sup>11</sup> Katz, *op. cit.*, p. 41. John Foxe, *A Sermon Preached at the Christening of a Certain Jew* (London, 1578), sig. E3r. Foxe could be strikingly violent in describing these "horrors": "... your intolerable scorpion like savagenes, so furiously boyling against the innocent infants of Christian gentiles: and the rest of your haynous abominations, insatiable butcheries, treasons, frensies, and madnes: If, I say, this most godly and mild patriarch Abraham were alive ... would he have accompted you for his sonnes or ever have acknowledged such impes to have proceeded out of his loyness?"

"And therefore (those cursed Jews) thou are duly charged with the guilt of innocent blood: englut then thy greedie guts with goare".

These stories also appeared in his *Acts and Monuments* which became an official statement of Elizabethan ideology (London, 1581), II, pp. 188, 277; Firth, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

<sup>12</sup> John Knox, *Works*, ed. by D. Laing (Edinburgh, 1855), IV, pp. 411-412. Were not the Spaniards "persecutors of his [Christ's] true members and haters of all vertue? As the odious nation of Spaniards doth manifestlie declare, who for very despit which they do beare against Christe Jesus, whom their forefathers did crucifie (for Jewes they are as histories do witnesse, and they themselves confesse) do this day make plaine warre against true professors of his holie Gospell".

"The Spaniards are Jewes, and they bragge that Marie of England is of the root of Jesse".

Only in the 1580s and especially in the wake of the Armada, as men spoke with increasing detail about the historical future, did the role of the Jews in the latter days assume dramatic prominence. A striking indication of this development occurs with the Essex minister Ralph Durden, who in 1586 sought to lead persecuted Elizabethan puritans – “the very Jews by nature” – off to Palestine. There these 144,000 elect would reinstitute Judea in anticipation of world conversion and the millennium<sup>13</sup>. Such radical identification of Jew with gentile saint would recur in anglophone culture for the next four centuries and is of course less the consequence of Durden’s or subsequent thinkers’ “influence” than of the identification of the realm (or a saved remnant within it) as an “elect” nation. It is by no means fortuitous that in this decade the puritan opposition introduced the term “patriot” into the English language. In varied but more characteristic forms, the latter-day Jewish conversion appears increasingly common in English writing and can be seen as culminating around the turn of the century in the work of the great English philo-Semites, Hugh Broughton and Thomas Brightman.

Brightman, the more important of the two in English thought, eventually exercised a profound influence which even today has yet to be fully recognized. But both men’s short-term impact proved at best diffuse. Brightman died suddenly in 1607, and his work was only published posthumously and abroad, while Broughton spent most of his later years in embittered self-exile<sup>14</sup>. Yet, during the early days of the seventeenth century Brightman did attract at least one significant disciple in Patrick Forbes, a Scotsman and a highly influential one at that. Even so, well in advance of the dissemination of Brightman’s work, other Scots developed quite striking expectations about the course of the latter day events and the place of the Jews within them.

<sup>13</sup> Capp, *op. cit.*, pp. 29, 28; Bauckham, *op. cit.*, pp. 188-191. Although subsequent proponents of this line of thought – Thomas Tany, Richard Brothers, Joanna Southcott – may have represented elements of the poor and the politically dispossessed, the Cambridge-educated Durden came from the Elizabethan elite.

<sup>14</sup> Brightman’s thought has been briefly reviewed in Toon, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-32; Firth, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-179; William M. Lamont, *“Marginal” Prynne, 1600-1669* (London, 1963), pp. 59-66. Brightman felt a genuine and deep affection for Jews which was times strikingly expressed. “The Jewes shall have no cause to find any harm or wrong at the hands of the Gentiles. Yea, rather they may hence forth looke for all good from them that may be, as who will empty all the power they have to encrease, advance and extoll them”.

The “beloved city” in *Revelation* 20:9 referred to the community of the converted Jews exclusively, for Brightman’s spiritualized interpretation of the first resurrection saw it as meaning their conversion. Brightman could even speak of walking “in the light of the Jewish Church” (*Revelation of the Revelation* [Amsterdam, 1615], pp. 905, 859).

Prior to the Henry Finch debacle in 1621, the modern authority on the subject finds that “the relatively placid days of James I” produced only the isolated work of Thomas Draxe who was “hardly a leading light of Jacobean intellectual life” (Katz, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-95).

Scottish apocalypticism had also adopted an increasingly forward-looking focus in the years after 1588, most notably with the enormously influential work of John Napier of Merchiston<sup>15</sup>. The conversion of the Jews similarly assumed greater significance, and the Reverend Robert Pont, one of the fathers of the Scottish Reformation, became persuaded that a proper analysis of the apocalypse linked with world chronology and a new scientific astrology could show the Jews conclusively that the Messiah had to come when he did<sup>16</sup>. By 1602 the Ayr Minister John Welsh could regard it as common ground with the Rhemist controversialists that the Jews would convert and that “their fall had been but for a time”. The point became an extremely important one for Welsh, for the conversion, significant as it was in itself, held still other and more immediate consequences: the event, it seems, could be argued plausibly only within the Protestant scenario. The Jewish Antichrist/False Messiah proposed by Roman Catholic theorists appeared to Welsh to be utterly incompatible with the expectation of Jewish conversion. Would the Jews first accept Christ and then be deceived by a false Messiah? Such an end-game apostasy seemed implausible to the point of absurdity and possessed no scriptural warrant whatsoever. Would they convert after the overthrow of Antichrist? The jam-packed three and a half year reign of Antichrist, posited by Catholicism immediately before the Last Judgement, simply did not leave a conceivable amount of time for these events. For it could hardly be expected that men’s outlook would suddenly and diametrically change in literally the last seconds of human history<sup>17</sup>. In so saying Welsh helped initiate a theme long a part of Scottish Protestantism, and more than fifty

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<sup>15</sup> John Napier, *A Plaine Discovery of the Whole Revelation . . .* (Edinburgh, 1593). Scotsmen who vigorously dissented from Napier’s view were remarkably gentle in their comments. Bishop Cowper’s criticism of Brightman and even Foxe would apply as well to Napier whom he simply described as “our country-man worthily renowned as peerless indeed” (*Works* [London, 1623], p. 822). The minister John Welsh responded to Catholic criticisms of “Marchistons doomesday” by saying simply: “he hes his own probable reasons”. (*A reply against M. Gilbert Browne, Priest* [Edinburgh, 1602], p. 168).

<sup>16</sup> Robert Pont, *A Newe Treatise of the Right Reckoning of Years and Ages of the World* (Edinburgh, 1599), pp. 21-22.

<sup>17</sup> *A reply against M. Gilbert Browne, Priest* (Edinburgh, 1602), p. 288. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Protestant apocalypticism left much greater scope for philo-Semitic feelings than did the Catholic scenarios, and it will likely emerge that expectations about the Jews proved a flash-point between radical and conservative Protestantisms. Conservative Protestant thinkers who sought rapprochement with Catholicism often drew on the Biblical criticism of the Laudian Henry Hammond or on continental scholars like Hugo Grotius, and their conclusions worked to the decided disadvantage of the Jews. Few Jews would convert in the last days; the wrath of God would fall upon them along with the Jewish Antichrist; their “carnal” understanding of scripture and faith paralleled the frenzied “enthusiasts”. Generally speaking, the more deeply apocalyptic an individual’s perspective, the more likely he possessed philo-Semitic attitudes, the more deeply “Anglo-Catholic” an individual, the more anti-Semitic. Cf. note 56 below.

years later the eminent minister James Durham would elaborate on it at authoritative length<sup>18</sup>. The fate of the Jews had assumed increased importance simply as a result of a deepened concern with the details of the prophetic future, but this process was accentuated because of its controversial potential. No obscure minister – indeed Knox’s son-in-law – Welsh was at this point particularly well connected with the Edinburgh court, and his book was reportedly reviewed and approved by no less a figure than King James VI himself.

But prior to the Revolution and the triumph of the Covenanters, no event more stimulated Scottish thought about the promise of the latter days – and of the Jews – than did the Union of Crowns in 1603. With the prospect of still closer union and the emergence of a new, powerful British state, an extraordinarily wide range of prophetic traditions seemed in the process of fulfillment. As the Emperor Constantine, born in Britain son of the British Helen, had marched off to Rome and established the Christian church, so James his successor would use the strength of English and Scottish arms for world reform and lead the true faith to its final victory. The term “Britain” itself turned out to have Hebrew roots which possessed a similar prophetic meaning, while a prophecy made in the days of Solomon, no less, had indicated the great earthly and heavenly glory that would befall the “two princes and emperors”, Constantine and James. The creation of Britain was thus an event of cosmic significance which could be compared without blasphemy to the incarnation and, appropriately, had been anticipated in scripture<sup>19</sup>. If James was in the fullest sense the heir and successor to Constantine, he was also in the figure of Jacob, as his name itself suggested and as the stone of his coronation seat loudly proclaimed. The British Israel had its Jacob raised up in the north, accepted in the south, and according to some contemporaries specifically “pointed to” by Isaiah<sup>20</sup>. Popular Galfridian prophecies scoffed at and

<sup>18</sup> *A Commentarie upon the Book of Revelation* . . . (Edinburgh and London, 1656), p. 672.

<sup>19</sup> The material on which these comments are based has been discussed at length in my “Scotland, Antichrist, and the Invention of Great Britain”, in *New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland*, ed. by J. Dwyer, R.A. Mason, A. Murdoch (Edinburgh, 1982), pp. 34-58.

<sup>20</sup> Within the context of the British Israel, James’ northern origins became a special blessing rather than a curse. James Maxwell, *A New Eight-fold Probation of the Church of Englands’ divine Constitution* . . . , p. 74; Maxwell, *A Demonstrative Defense or Ten-fold Probation of the Church of England* . . . (London, 1617), pp. 2-3; *Isaiah* 41:25, 41:8-12.

“On Jacobs staff, cast Jacobs stone so farre,  
That Tongues and Tribes may talk of Jacobs glory,  
Got out of gor’d Turkes, and put out in some story.  
Constantines seat joyne to his cradle Towne,  
Byzance to York, make Charles them both to Crowne.  
Grant him this gift, *New Rome* Constantins Seate,

denounced by earlier reformers like Foxe and Knox, now assumed an unprecedented respectability, and Robert Birrell noted in his diary that “at this time the haill commons that had red or understanding, wer daylie speiking and exponing of Thomas Rymer hes prophesie and of uther prophesies quhilk wer prophesied in auld times”. Even the Scottish Archbishop, John Spottiswood, self-described “Metropolitane of North-Britane”, marvelled at the obvious fulfillment of the ancient sayings in the person of King James. Perhaps only in the excited British age could an English propsector suggest to the new king that he was so much the type of David and Solomon that he too would have his reward of the minerals of the earth, that Scotland was prophesied to become rich in the latter days, and that the Leadhills of Lanarkshire were no less than the historical site of Eden<sup>21</sup>. The promise of the new Britain seemed breathtaking, boundless. If with hindsight James’ ineptitude at home and his absurd, ultimately disastrous policy abroad must make these extraordinary expectations truly preposterous, in context they proved compelling to remarkably large numbers of Scots and Englishmen. In 1603 James cut an impressive figure even to Catholic eyes – the literate, pious, Christian king, as his much translated writings attested – and continental powers witnessed the failure of the British project with relief<sup>22</sup>.

Following James south to the seat of the new Britain and into the promise of the new age were the poet and scholar James Maxwell and the poet and politician William Alexander. In his way each left a significant mark on both Scottish and English culture – Alexander emerging as one of the most prominent figures at the early Stuart Court. Each had a profound sense of Britain’s apocalyptic destiny, and as a result each found himself concerned about the role of the Jews in the latter days.

Maxwell had been a member of the Edinburgh circle of mathematicians, astrologers, and apocalyptic exegetes of which Napier and Pont were the most famous, a circle broken up at the Union of Crowns. In the south the young Scot devoted his life to promoting the new British state and the church “such as it was in the dayes of Constantine the great”. He wrote massive replies to the Counter-reformers du Perron, Becan, Gretser, and

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With his new name, Charles-Constantin the great.

To Jacobs well, joyne Jacobs royall stone,

To Jacobs Bethell, Jacobs Albion”

(*Carolanna* [London, n.d.], sig. D3v).

<sup>21</sup> Williamson, “Scotland, Antichrist, and the Invention of Great Britain”; also G.B. Harrison, ed., *A Jacobean Journal . . . 1603-1606* (London, 1941), pp. 50-51; *The Romance and Prophecies of Thomas of Erceldoune*, ed. by J.A.H. Murray, Early English Text Society, O.S. 51 (London, 1875), pp. xl-xli; W.R. Foster, *The Church before the Covenants* (Edinburgh, 1975), p. 40.

<sup>22</sup> E.g., Henri IV. Maurice Lee, Jr., *James I and Henri IV* (Urbana, 1980), p. 10.



Scioppius, advanced claims for the Stuart headship of Christendom based upon truly extraordinary genealogical studies, and developed an apocalyptic vision of Britain based upon knowledge of prophetic sources which Marjorie Reeves has found "remarkable". Only a small proportion of his work saw print, and many of his writings can be known to us today only through brief descriptions and through his quaint verse summaries which apparently enjoyed considerable popularity. Like James, he felt far more hostile to the Antichrist at Constantinople than to the one based at Rome, and he even thought it conceivable that the reform of the Roman church might not involve violence. Like James, Maxwell stood firm with the Austrian Hapsburgs – despite their Catholicism – against the "enemies of the Christian name"<sup>23</sup>. In many respects the Scottish equivalent to the French Guillaume Postel or the Italian Tommaso Campanella, Maxwell sought underlying unity within an increasingly fragmented and discordant world. Britain would reconquer the East, restoring the Eastern Roman Empire under its original Constantinian title, and this final empire of mankind would involve a Christian order extending from Constantinople to York, from Calvary to Kyle<sup>24</sup>.

But no one at all familiar with the personality of James Stuart could seriously expect him to conquer the East or anything else for that matter. That responsibility fell to his son Henry (who fully accepted the role) and, on Henry's untimely death, to the appropriately named Charles. Indeed

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<sup>23</sup> Maxwell, *Admirable and Notable Prophecies* (London, 1615), sig. A3v-B1r; *Carolanna*, sig. F1v-F3r; Public Record Office: SP 14/84; M. Reeves, "History and Eschatology: Medieval and Early Protestant Thought in Some English and Scottish Writings", *Medievalia et Humanistica*, N.S. 4 (Denton, Texas, 1973), p. 113; also see Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 499-500. Regarding James' foreign policy, see Lee, *op. cit.*; F.L. Baumer, "England, the Turk, and the Common Corps of Christendom", *American Historical Review*, L (1944-45), pp. 26-48; J.R. Jones, *Britain and Europe in the 17th Century* (London, 1966). The king's attitudes are revealed in comments he made to a Huguenot nobleman: "Sachez, Monsieur, que tout ce que nous avons escrit en defence de la [verite] de notre Religion ne nous fauldra jamais le courage de le maintenir avecq les armes, et aux [despens] de notre sang de justifier la profession de notre foy. Mais quant a nous mettre en armes pour ce seul subject, et propager par violence l'Evangelié de Christ, il y a premierement question de licite a scauvoir si par autorite fondee en l'Escripture sainte on le doubt attendre car ou il ny revelation especiale pour seruire commission. Il ne nous souvient ou d'aucun teste de l'Evangelié ou d'aucun exemple de l'Eglise primitive qui donne pouvoir a planter par voye d'armes la religion de Christ . . ." (National Library of Scotland: Denmilne MSS 33.1.13, No. 10, in Helen G. Strafford, *James VI and the Throne of England* [New York, 1940], p. 248, n. 90).

<sup>24</sup> "Scotland, Antichrist, and the Invention of Great Britain". Maxwell shared an abiding interest in the magical traditions with both Napier and Pont. A great admirer of Hermes Trismegistus, Pico della Mirandola, Ficino, and Pythagoras, Maxwell also regarded the seer Merlin as within that tradition: "he was not a diabolical but onely a natural magician, well seen in the admirable secrets of nature, and especially in astrologie, and . . . his horoscope or constellation did incline him to ayme at the fore-knowledge and foretelling of things to come" (*Admirable and Notable Prophecies*, p. 14).

prophecy seemed to indicate that the Turk would probably be overthrown by a British-led, northern Europe about the year 1630. By contrast, James' mission concerned peace and reconciliation: he was James the Concorde, the Peacemaker who would reconcile Rome to the Gospel and who, apparently through his writings, would convert the Jews. Was it any accident that the king bore the same name as the first bishop of Jerusalem? That apostle had written "an epistle to the dispersed beleieving Jewes for the furthering of their Christian conversation", and Maxwell hoped his king "will doe the like one day to the same, now misbeleieving and dispersed nation, for the furthering of their Christian conversion and collection". In the British Middle East, the Jews would find restoration under this unique Christian emperor. As Maxwell proclaimed in verse which lost none of its passion through its failure to scan,

"Great Jesus grant that as one of the Name  
Of peace-bred James was the first that did beare  
The Bishops office in Jerusalem;  
So may our James that sacred sea upreare:  
That Jewes with Gentiles united in one  
Next [to] Jesus may serve James of Albion".

The poet would present the most extraordinary picture of James, receiving the acclaim of the Jews gathered in Jerusalem – while representing Christ in the fullest conceivable sense:

"O happy sight to see great Britaines King  
One day descending from Mount Olivet!  
O happy song, to heare the Hebrewes sing!  
For joy of heart James to congratulate:  
Blest be the king that comes in Jesus name  
To christen Jewes and crowne Jerusalem"<sup>25</sup>.

Maxwell surely numbers among the very earliest to suggest that the restoration of the Jews would prove one of the great tasks of the British Empire, and his train of thought owes nothing to Brightman. Quite the contrary, Maxwell's Constantinian imperialism, his resolute break with "puritanisme and Genevisme" makes his work completely antithetical to Brightman's. It is instead the product of the political excitement generated by the Union of Crowns and the promise of the Jacobean order. Only a man

<sup>25</sup> *The Laudible Life and Deplorable Death . . . of Prince Henry* (London, 1612), sig. E2v, 2Er. Regarding Prince Henry's expectations, see J.W. Williamson, *The Myth of the Conqueror: Prince Henry Stewart, a Study in 17th Century Personation* (New York, 1978). Maxwell's attitude toward the Turkish Empire was often intensely violent. See for example his *Monument of Remembrance* (London, 1613), sig. D2r-D4v. The second line of the passage cited above would scan if it read: "Of peace-bred James that was the first did beare", and the version we have may simply be a printer's error.

like Maxwell could defend the Anglican sign of the cross against Puritan objection because it was needful in the ceremony for baptizing the Jews<sup>26</sup>.

Maxwell's verse doubtless propagated his ideas more widely than any learned treatise could have done. Great things had been expected of him in Scotland, and in England he quickly connected himself with a number of significant minds. Nevertheless he did not have a successful career and was never fully accepted by the establishment he so tirelessly promoted. He never received the appointment he sought; his comments on Frederick's accession to the Bohemian Crown actually got him into political trouble in 1620; Archbishop Laud dismissed him as "Montebank Maxwell"<sup>27</sup>. Yet ideas quite akin to his cropped up at exactly the same time within the highest circles of government. William Alexander also followed James into the southern kingdom, but his experience contrasts completely with that of the hapless Maxwell. Initially gentleman extraordinary of Prince Henry's bedchamber, the Scottish courtier soon acquired a knighthood as well as more tangible indicators of favor. Subsequently he became Master of Requests, then a member of the Privy Council, then its President, then Secretary of State for Scotland, and eventually first Earl of Stirling: long a favorite of Charles, he was unarguably one of the most influential Scots at the Court of St. James<sup>28</sup>.

Although Alexander's career differed significantly from Maxwell's, many of his commitments did not. In his poem *Doomesday, or the great day of the Lords judgement* – with its more than 11,000 turgid lines making it one of the longest metrical compositions ever attempted in the English language – the courtier detailed the papal Antichrist, the Turks, the Jews, the latter-day glory, and the end of days. In still other poetry, also written in the first decade of the seventeenth century, he merged Galfridian with sacred prophecy and found James (and in his person the union of Scotland and England) "held back, as best to grace these last worst times". The resulting Britain promised to emerge "the worlds Mistris", the dominant power in the final age. Like Maxwell himself – indeed like Francis Bacon and King James himself – Alexander focused his hostility on the Ottoman Empire rather than the papal monarchy, and would pacify Europe by leading a crusade against the Turk<sup>29</sup>. Like Maxwell, he quite reasonably looked to Prince Henry's leadership rather than James' in the con-

<sup>26</sup> *Eight-fold Probation*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>27</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1631-3*, ed. by John Bruce (London, 1862), p. 25. He ended his days on the continent, reportedly corresponding with the Roman Antichrist himself.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas H. McGrail, *Sir William Alexander, Earl of Stirling: a Biographical Study* (London, 1940).

<sup>29</sup> "Scotland, Antichrist, and the Invention of Great Britain", pp. 49-50.

quest of the East<sup>30</sup>. Like Maxwell, he eagerly awaited the conversion of the Jews

“Till ours be full though *Israels* light lyes spent,  
Our light shall once [at one time] them to salvation leade,  
Is God like man that he should now repent,  
that promise which to *Abrams* seede was made?  
For his great harvest ere that Christ be bent,  
The Jews shall have a Church, and him their head.  
Both Jews and Gentiles once, one Church shall prove,  
We fear their law, they our Gospel love”.

The closing line seems almost to suggest a kind of reciprocity associated with only the most thorough-going philo-Semitism. “And why should we not seeke to have them sav’d,/ Since first from them Salvation we receiv’d?” The great obstacle of course was Roman idolatry which, understandably, discredited the Christian faith:

“This sign [of the approaching end of days] it seems might soon accom-  
plished be,  
Were not where now remains that Race of *Shems*,  
The Gentile dregs and idols which they see,  
Makes them loth all, for what their law contemnes”<sup>31</sup>.

At mid-century this line of thought led to the seemingly obvious suggestion that the Jews be re-admitted to England where they could have an opportunity to witness reformed Christianity first hand.

Alexander urged the conquest of the East in terms every bit as blood-thirsty as Maxwell’s, and he would never lose sight of the “miserable follie of Christians”, who, dangerously embroiled in “intestine” wars, neglected the great, glorious, and easy conquest of Constantinople. And yet any such imperialist adventure was simply unrealistic within the context of European politics. Unlike Maxwell, the Scottish knight never imagined the “collection” of the Jews in Palestine under British aegis or any other. Alexander looked West rather than East and saw the British era characterized by American colonies instead of a revived Constantinian empire. The necessarily bloody conquest of the Middle East compared unfavorably with the bloodless, indeed humanitarian colonizing of the New World. The vast, newly found pagan cultures of the West – innocent in their ignorance of Christianity, unlike the vicious Islamic East or corrupted Christian Europe – must have an opportunity to embrace the truth before the end of days. “All nations once [at one time] the Gospells light shall

<sup>30</sup> Henry would “bring eternal Trophees to the North,/ While as thou do’st thy fathers forces leade,/ And art the hand, whileas is he the head” (*Works*, II, p. 388).

<sup>31</sup> *Works*, II, pp. 51-52.

see,/ That ignorance no just excuse may breed”; “*America to Europe* may succeed,/ God may of stones raise up to *Abram* seed”<sup>32</sup>. The conversion of the Jews linked with the conversion of the American Indian – rather than with a British Jerusalem – and became an enduring feature of both Scottish and English apocalypticism. From the perspective of the British apocalypse, Alexander’s Nova Scotian experience proved curiously relevant to the fate of the Jews.

Alexander provides only one indication of the apocalypse’s cultural centrality for Scotsmen, and of the expectations concerning the Jews it could urge. Scots seized upon Brightman’s *Revelation of the Revelation* quite early, and no less a figure than James Melville recommended its reading to the Scottish ministry, for it had “moir cleirnes, force of demonstratioun for the truthe and in solid and lairnit storie than all the hellishe Jesuites and warldling formalistis againes the same”<sup>33</sup>. One of Brightman’s earliest disciples was the Scottish minister and laird, Patrick Forbes of Corse. A self-proclaimed moderate or “midman”, Forbes shared none of his master’s enthusiasm for the Scoto-Genevan church policy. With Forbes we have no frustrated Puritan nor defeated Presbyterian, but the Bishop of Aberdeen; it would be Brightman’s ironic fate to find his first significant follower in the most respected member of the Jacobean and Caroline episcopal bench in Scotland.

Forbes had no interest in Maxwell’s and Alexander’s British vision, and he specifically rejected Brightman’s anglocentric reading of the apocalypse. He also rejected Brightman’s radical suggestion that the first resurrection described in *Revelation* 20 referred to the conversion of the Jews and that the world was in the midst of a second millennium which would extend from 1300 to 2300. Nevertheless Forbes knew that the defeat of Antichrist, Papacy and Turk, would not immediately issue in the Second Coming of Christ, but in a happy world where faith and righteousness reigned. Only at some undeterminable time in the future would Christ return “as a thiefe upon a peaceable and secure world . . . which will undoubtedly be when, upon the destruction of all troublers, the Church enjoying a quiet state shall fall in the sleepe of security”<sup>34</sup>. One of the key events in the lead-up to this last age was the conversion of the Jews:

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 48, 50.

<sup>33</sup> James Melville, *Autobiography and Diary*, ed. by R. Pitcairn, Wodrow Society (Edinburgh, 1842), p. 785.

<sup>34</sup> Patrick Forbes, *An Exquisite Commentarie upon the Revelation of Saint John* (London, 1613), pp. 226, 236-238. “. . . many heereupon have imagined that the overthrow of Antichrist and these huge armies of opponents should bee conjoined with Christ his last coming. But the Spirit hath no such meaning. . . . For if the last judgement and coming of Christ . . . had so notable markes as the foile of Antichrist, taking of the Dragon, and so great tumults, warres, and commotions, with the havocke of so huge armies besieging the Church, how

“It is a wonderfull providence that the Jews, fiftene hundreth yeeres not possessing one foot of property in the earth, yet are kept a separate people, that in his owne time the Lord may be magnified in his mercy and truth towards them, to the astonishment of all the world”.

Despite his respect for Brightman, Forbes did not know for sure whether they would actually once again inhabit “their owne lande”. The typological character of the text (*Revelation* 16) simply did not allow a more conclusive statement than that they would rejoin the Jerusalem which was the faith, but in one respect this circumstance is remarkably revealing. Even if scripture could not be dogmatically so interpreted, “yet certainly my heart inclineth to think so”<sup>35</sup>. Their conversion – and Forbes visibly ached for it – would remove their “reproach” which in turn implied that they should “brooke a state in the eies of the world”. The inclination of the heart in the end taught more than the lessons of scripture, and Forbes ended his days in discussions with “a learned Jew” discovering (excitedly no doubt) of their expectation that the Messiah would be revealed to them in about 1650<sup>36</sup>.

For Forbes as for Alexander and so many Protestants, the Papacy blocked their conversion. The Jews expected the Messiah to come – rightly – only after the destruction of the Roman Empire “which now standeth onlie in Pontificality”. But regardless of Jewish expectations, Antichrist’s decline would make the truth visible, for “in place of this idolatrous superstition (whereat they do now stumble) . . . they shall see the purity of the true worship erected”<sup>37</sup>. Forbes felt none of Brightman’s certainty about the deeds of the Jews in the latter days and the final sequence of events. Surely the orient as a whole would come with the Jews into the Christian faith – “and apparently by them”. But the precise means remained unclear. Forbes did not project a great crusade – he was utterly hostile to the medieval “kindlers of that tragicall and superstitious warre for the recovery of Jerusalem” – and he thought it possible that the fall of Rome and the Jewish conversion could in themselves work the collapse of the Ottomans<sup>38</sup>. And yet for all these revisions and qualifications, Forbes’ study ultimately constituted but a limited modification of “the judgement of one

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could either that day come as a thiefe on a peaceable world; or the Church, in such cruell invasion, be at ease and sleeping?”

Forbes’ commentary, slightly expurgated in London because of “misconceived jealousies” arising from English patriotism, would be reissued the following year on the continent under the title, *A Learned Commentarie upon the Revelation of Saint John* (Middleburg, 1614).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168.

<sup>36</sup> B.W. Ball, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

<sup>37</sup> *Exquisite Commentarie*, pp. 168-169.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 171, 229, 247. Forbes, like most Scots and Englishmen, believed that most Jews lived in the Middle East, a belief reinforced by *Revelation* 16.

deeply seene in these mysteries and deserving well of the Church for his learned Commentaries on [the *Revelation*]]”<sup>39</sup>. It is more than ironic that the aging King James, turning away from his earlier apocalyptic interests and what now appeared vain hopes about the end of days, should have bitterly denounced Brightman in 1619:

“Let the vain chilliasts gape for that thousand yeares of Christs kingdome to bee settled upon earth, and let Brightman bring down that heavenly Jerusalem and settle it in this world, the Word of God assures us that the latter days shall prove the worst and most dangerous days”<sup>40</sup>.

He had just previously and with some difficulty persuaded one of Brightman’s earliest followers to become his newest lord spiritual. Along with Brightman and Napier, Forbes provided direct inspiration to the radicals of the 1640s.

#### *Conclusion: Scottish Public Culture and the Jews*

Long before 1621 when the English serjeant-at-law, Sir Henry Finch, launched his ill-fated *The Worlds Great Restauration, or the Calling of the Jews* – sometimes portrayed as the earliest indication of Brightman’s influence<sup>41</sup> – Scottish court culture had produced widely disseminated expectations about the Jews. Forbes drew explicitly and much more directly on Brightman than did Finch. Alexander and Maxwell looked to a specifically British future in which the Jews possessed a positive and conspicuous place. Their writings unquestionably helped promote a view of the Stuart regime as hospitable to apocalyptic philo-Semitism. Moreover, unlike Brightman and Finch, all three had deeply committed themselves to the establishment and were in no sense Puritans or Presbyterians; all three opposed or would have opposed the National Covenant of 1638. To be sure, William Laud, King James and his son became increasingly disenchanted with the apocalyptic perspective and, with it, expectations about the Jews which so powerfully underscored its urgency. Men must not continually pray for the end of days, warned James. Both Laud and the king took offense at the quasi-chilliaist, Jewish dreams of men like Brightman and Finch. But in fact the regime had been founded on ideas fundamentally akin to these. As the government became intellectually self-divided, so it became isolated from the realm as a whole.

The Scottish Revolution of 1638 issued in the National Covenant and

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.

<sup>40</sup> James I and VI, *Works* (London, 1623), p. 581; *A Meditation upon the Lords Prayer* . . . (London, 1619), pp. 40-41; for the radical use of Forbes as an authority, see Christianson, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

<sup>41</sup> Peter Toon, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-34.

ultimately shook the foundations of the British Isles as massively as any event in their history, sweeping Alexander and subsequently all his associates from power. Profoundly informed by eschatological expectations, the Revolution developed and elaborated many of the themes and hopes articulated by Scotsmen during the decade following the Union of Crowns, and there exists a sad paradox in Alexander's re-issuing his apocalyptic poetry at the very outset of the great upheaval. Samuel Rutherford, the Revolution's most distinguished theoretician – indeed its grand old man – spoke of “Scotland, whom our Lord took off the dunghill and out of hell and made a fair bride to Himself”. “He will embrace both us the little sister and the elder sister, the Church of the Jews”<sup>45</sup>. Rutherford found in *The Song of Songs* a powerful Jewish prayer for the salvation of the Gentiles and an unmistakable prophecy of its accomplishment. Now the Gentiles had a similar responsibility and a similar prospect, the fulfillment of which would achieve human destiny and culminate the sacred drama. This abiding hope and sense of responsibility informed Rutherford's thinking throughout his life:

“I have been this time by-passed thinking much of the incoming of the Kirk of the Jews. Pray for them. When they were in the Lord's house, at their Father's elbow, they were longing for the coming of their little sister, the Kirk of the Gentiles. They said to their Lord, ‘We have a little Sister, and she hath no breasts; what shall we do for our Sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?’ Let us give them a meeting. What shall we do for our elder Sister, the Jews? Lord Jesus give them breasts!

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Oh, to see the sight next to Christ's coming the most joyful! Our elder brethren, the Jews, and Christ fall upon one another's necks and kiss each other! They have been so long asunder, they will be kind to one another when they meet: O longed for and lovely day, dawn! O sweet Jesus, let me see that sight that will be as life from the dead, thee [Christ] and thy ancient people in mutual embraces! . . . the day is near the dawning; the sky is riving, our Beloved will be on us ere we be aware. The Antichrist, and death and hell, and Christ's enemies and ours, shall be bound and cast into the Bottomless Pit”<sup>46</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> McGrail, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

<sup>43</sup> Forbes' son and successor at Aberdeen led the only intellectual opposition to the Covenanting movement. Alexander was probably the most hated man in Scotland after Laud; his son attempted to supply arms to anti-Covenant resistance. Maxwell made a career of rebutting both Calvinist and Counter-Reformed theology.

<sup>44</sup> *Meditation upon the Lords Prayer*, p. 36; William Laud, *A Sermon Preached before his Majesty* . . . (London, 1621), p. 23.

<sup>45</sup> Samuel Rutherford, *Letters*, ed. by A.A. Bonar (New York, 1850), No. 26, pp. 71-72. For Rutherford's role in the Scottish Revolution see Walter Makey, *The Church of the Covenant* (Edinburgh, 1979), p. 91 and *passim*.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, Nos. 12, 39, pp. 49, 89.



Rutherford long believed that Scotland had a special relation to God and a special purpose. After 1637 he became increasingly persuaded that indeed Scotland – and with her the kingdoms of England and Ireland – would actually prove the theater of the historical redemption. “Who knows but this great work which is begun in Scotland, now when is it going into England, and it has tane [taken] some footing there, [who knows] but the Lord will make it to go over the sea?” “Who knows but He will make them [the Scots] a sharp threshing instrument to beat Rome and the Pope and Antichrist to pieces, and make all her merchants to cry, ‘Babylon, Babylon, that great city is fallen’?”<sup>47</sup> Accordingly Rutherford would later assure the English House of Commons: “you have now the power and opportunity to send the Glory of Christ over sea to all Europe; the eyes of Nations are upon you”<sup>48</sup>. Might not Christ indeed “have one fair day of it in the world” before the general resurrection and the Last Judgement. There at the ends of the earth, there in the Isles would arise the prophetic new Zion.

“... Christ will not want the Isles-men; the Isles shall wait for his law: we are his inheritance, and he will sell no part of his inheritance.

\* \* \*

Long before this Kirk, in the second psalm, the ends of the earth, Scotland and England, were gifted of the Father to his Son Christ; and that is an old Act Parliament decreed by our Lord and printed four thousand years ago . . .

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I hope Christ is upon a great marriage; and that his wooing and suiting of his excellent bride doth take its beginning from us, the ends of the earth. Oh, what joy and what glory would I judge it if my heaven should be suspended till I might have leave to run on foot to be a witness of that marriage-glory, and see Christ put on the glory of his last marriage love on earth; when he shall enlarge his love bed, and set it upon the tops of the mountains, and take in the Elder Sister, the Jews, and the fulness of the Gentiles!”<sup>49</sup>

“Now, O Scotland, God be thanked thy name is in the Bible”. “Read Scotland’s Charter Psalm ii.8, xlv and lxxii.10”. But the prophetic British future inherently linked with the triumph of the Jews: a great blow against

<sup>47</sup> Samuel Rutherford, *Quaint Sermons of Samuel Rutherford, hitherto unpublished*, ed. by A.A. Bonar (London, 1885), p. 36.

<sup>48</sup> Samuel Rutherford, *Sermon to the House of Commons, 31 January 1643 [1644]* (London, 1644), p. 7.

<sup>49</sup> *Quaint Sermons, loc. cit.* *Letters*, Nos. 41, 244, 294, pp. 91, 386, 479. Even in moments critical of Britain the theme continues to appear. “Oh, what could my soul desire more, next to my Lord Jesus, while I am in this flesh, but that Christ and his kingdom might be great among Jews and Gentiles; and that the isles (and amongst them overclouded and darkened Britain) might have the glory of a noon-day’s sun!” (*Letters*, No. 194, p. 303).

He certainly expected the Lord to have “one fair day of it in the world” before the Last Judgement.

Antichrist (perhaps the final one), the restoration of the Scottish Church ("our Second Temple"), and the joining of Scot and Jew with the bridegroom Christ in "his bed of love", all formed interconnected elements within a single process now well under way<sup>50</sup>.

"we trust our Lord is fetching a blow upon the Beast and the scarlet-colored Whore, to the end that he may bring in his ancient widow-wife, our dear sister, the Church of the Jews. Oh, what a heavenly heaven were it to see them come in by this mean, and suck the breasts of their little sister, and renew their old love with their first Husband, Christ our Lord! They are booked in God's Word as a bride contracted upon Jesus! Oh, for a sight, in this flesh of mine, of the prophesied marriage between Christ and them! . . . The kings of Tarshish and of the Isles must bring presents to our Lord Jesus [Psalm 72:10]. And Britain is one of the chiefest Isles; why then but we may believe that our kings of this Island shall come in and bring their glory to the New Jerusalem wherein Christ shall dwell in the latter days?"<sup>51</sup>

Gone is the ancient charge of deicide, gone too the old medieval tales and the bitter complaint of stubbornness so characteristic of earlier reformers. Rutherford fully accepted Christian orthodoxy on the subject, and he certainly made anti-Jewish comments, but his emphasis is palpably prophetic and positive<sup>52</sup>. It is surely not surprising that Rutherford rehearsed these themes of Scottish hope and British destiny, and of the defeat of Antichrist in his sermons to the nervous Covenanting troops when in 1640 a Scottish army crossed the English frontier for the first time in nearly a century. But did the soldiers also share his obvious enthusiasm for the marriage of the Jews to "their old husband"<sup>53</sup>? The new covenant did not simply replace

<sup>50</sup> Samuel Rutherford, *Fourteen Communion Sermons*, ed. A.A. Bonar (Glasgow, 1877), p. 116; cited in S.A. Burrell, "The Apocalyptic Vision of the Early Covenanters", *Scottish Historical Review* XLIII (1964), p. 16; *Letters*, No. 187, p. 293. "Now, O Scotland, God be thanked, thy name is in the Bible. Christ spake to us long since ere we were born. . . . read Scotland's Charter Psalm ii.8, xlv, lxx.10. Will ye then believe?"

<sup>51</sup> *Letters*, No. 278, p. 460; he frequently repeated these themes: "I would fain believe and pray for a new bride of Jews and Gentiles to our Lord Jesus, after the land of graven images shall be laid waste; and that our Lord Jesus is on horseback, hunting and pursuing the Beast; and that England and Ireland shall be well-swept chambers for Christ and his righteousness to dwell in; for he hath opened our graves in Scotland, and the two dead and buried witnesses are risen again, and are prophesying" (*Ibid.*, No. 289, p. 465).

<sup>52</sup> Rutherford necessarily saw the Jews' rejection of Christ as a great sin, and he certainly was capable of anti-Jewish remarks. But all of this becomes dwarfed by his hopes for the future. Occasionally he speaks of both Jews and Gentiles crucifying Christ; at other moments the Jews appear rather as a metaphor for mankind. "But as it is true of the Jews, so it is of us". In the end the calling of the Gentiles – and in particular the Scots – required the fall of the Jews (*Quaint Sermons*, pp. 68, 72, 118, 306; *Fourteen Communion Sermons*, pp. 29-31, 41, 47, 66, 115-116, 133-136, 145-147).

<sup>53</sup> *Quaint Sermons*, *loc. cit.* "Who knows but this great work which is begun in Scotland now when it is going into England and has tane some footing there, [who knows] but the Lord will make it to go over sea? Who knows but the Lord will make Scotland, who is a

the old, but curiously reverberated with it. The modern Jew was no burnt-out remnant, but a vital force within the dynamic of salvation.

Scotland had achieved significance only through the covenant, through legislative action with the Lord – language long anticipated by John Welsh, at least ostensibly with James VI's explicit approval. But the Judaic element had become much more specified. Archibald Johnston, Lord Warriston, a lawyer who helped shape virtually all the public statements of the Covenanters, found Scotland and Israel to be "the only tuo suorne nations to the Lord". The experience of the ancient Jews and the latter-day Scots so closely paralleled one another that the former necessarily spoke with unique relevance to the Scottish Revolution. The stories of the Jews "ar written for our admonition, upon quhom the ends of the world ar come; quhilk may be best applyed to us of any people, and to us mor fitly in this tyme of our voyage nor at any uther"<sup>54</sup>. After a point with Warriston Scottish identity and Jewish identity tended to merge, and Psalms 78 and 106, the ninth chapter of Nehemiah, "and syklyks" appeared to describe Scottish history since 1560 every bit as closely as it did the Davidic age. But of course in the latter days contemporaneous Jewish experience would also prove extremely important, and rumors of Jewish conversion could set Warriston and the whole of Edinburgh aflutter in July of 1652 – long after Cromwell's armies had smashed and largely discredited the Covenanting movement<sup>55</sup>.

If Rutherford was the Scottish Revolution's greatest theorist, James Durham was its greatest and virtually official commentator on the apocalypse, and his work provides the fullest Scottish statement about the future of the Jews. The Jews, Durham insisted, had had in all times a special relationship to God, and their covenant with Him had never fully dissolved even after the advent of Christianity

"For it is His Wife He is to be married with, which is peculiar to the Jews, who in some respect stand in a tye and relation to God by that Covenant with Abraham &c. which is not with any other nation that can come in then

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worm indeed in comparison of other nations, to be a sharp threshing instrument to thresh the mountains [*i.e.*, the great powers] and to beat the hills to pieces? Who knows but He will make them [the Scots] a sharp threshing instrument to beat Rome and the Pope and Antichrist to pieces, and make all her merchants to cry, "Babylon, Babylon, that great city, is fallen"? O! For to see that great stumbling-block that stands into the of Christian religion tane out of the way, and then to see the people of the Jews brought in again to Christ, their old husband and married upon Him, and the fulness of the Gentiles!"

For an accurate if uninspiring narrative of these events, see David Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution, 1637-44. The Triumph of the Covenanters* (New York, 1973), pp. 176-213.

<sup>54</sup> Archibald Johnston of Warriston, *Diary, 1632-1639*, ed. by G.M. Paul, *Scottish History Society* No. 61 (Edinburgh, 1911), p. 344.

<sup>55</sup> Archibald Johnston of Warriston, *Diary, 1650-1654*, ed. by D.H. Fleming, *Scottish History Society*, Second Ser. No. 18 (Edinburgh, 1919), p. 178.

to the Church . . . for they are beloved for the fathers sake, when broken off, and the fathers sake relateth to the Covenant made with them”<sup>56</sup>.

Although all believers became “kings” in Christ, the phrase about “the kings from the east” (*Revelation* 16:12) referred to Christian Jews in the latter days: “and why may not that ancient privileged people get names importing a singular respect to them, especially considering that God may at their conversion furnish them generally with such spiritual and royal inducements, that the feeble amongst them may be as David, and give also unto them a large outward dominion”<sup>57</sup>. Durham expected the Jews to play a central role in the destruction of the Turkish Empire and quite possibly of the Roman Antichrist as well – the latter event perhaps achieved through a vast pincer operation involving the Western monarchies and the Jews out of the East. It was at least probable that God should honor his “everlasting Covenant” with them through the restoration of a Jewish state of “great possessions and Dominions in the East”<sup>58</sup>.

Scotsmen dreamed Jewish dreams both as revolutionary activists and as establishment stalwarts. The Jewish dimension deepened and became more articulate as the apocalyptic impulse deepened and became more articulate, as the mechanism of the National Covenant tightened the parallel between Scot and Jew, and as the Jewish role in the latter days seemed increasingly to vindicate the Protestant scenario, but the continuities within Scottish apocalypticism are truly remarkable. The Armada experience had given British apocalyptic thought a far sharper focus on the future and the events of the latter days. Yet the Union of Crowns proved at least as decisive for Scottish expectations. In the final age the ancient verities shift-

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<sup>56</sup> James Durham, *A Commentarie upon the Book of Revelation* . . . (Edinburgh and London, 1658), pp. 691-692, 693, 698. The introduction written by the Glasgow minister John Carstairs lamented the decay of believers’ zeal against the blood-thirsty Beast who enjoyed a huge following in the world – “to the great offense of the Jews” (sig. A2v). Even the conservative minister Robert Baillie, who certainly did not share a number of Durham’s views, nevertheless endorsed the book and recommended its publication. In the face of English sectarian and millenarian radicalism, Baillie had minimized the role of the Jews at the end of the days, and although his conservatism was not so severe as to lead to the anti-Semitism evidently implicit in “Anglo-catholicism”, his efforts to dampen Millenarian enthusiasm do parallel the phenomenon discussed in note 17 (*A Dissuasive from the Errors of the Time* [London, 1645], pp. 233, 243, 246-247, 250 and *passim*).

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 617.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 617-620. Durham was struck that the Jews “are still where they live, a distinct people by themselves unmixed with other races” (619). Also like Forbes, he clearly wanted the restoration of Israel but could find no dogmatic assurance within scripture. Durham had an obvious affection for “that ancient married people [*i.e.*, married to God], unto which covenant God hath respect, even in their last calling” (618). “It is not simply that He covenanted with them a Covenant of Grace (for so He hath done with many others) but in a Covenant with special promises and grounds which make it a singular tie in these things, beyond what others have” (619).

ed as the Scottish-generated British order inspired the world with knowledge and righteousness. In such a world the Jews would prove crucially important, for they promised to play a unique role – not only in the triumph of truth and justice – but in what it meant to be a Briton and a Scot. With the exception of Patrick Forbes who was in part concerned to excise the narrowly English character from Brightman's vision (and who ran into difficulties with his London publisher as a result), Scottish writers confronted the same problem as did Hector Boece a century earlier, the problem of developing a vocabulary for articulating Scottish experience and Scottish value. Scotsmen might join with Welsh and Rutherford and see their country raised from the "dunghill", and made "the Lordes delite . . . and married to Him", or "made the spectacle of his mercy unto all the nations and above all others", and thereby minimize the significance of the Scottish past to the Scottish future<sup>59</sup>. After all, who were the Jews before Abraham? Alternatively, with Maxwell and Alexander, they might emphasize Scottish history and genealogy and find within it their realm's prophetic destiny. But whether past-affirming or past-denying, whether revolutionary or traditionalist, Scottish self-understanding in the seventeenth century largely turned on apocalyptic expectations, at the heart of whose fulfillment stood the Jews. In more than one sense, the extreme covenanting perspective can verge on the implication that to become a Scot one had first to become a Jew. But from almost all perspectives, Scotsmen looked to the Jews to assure their culture's vitality and cogency.

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<sup>59</sup> *E.g.*, Welsh, *op. cit.*, sig. B6v, C1v. Reinforcing the implications of geography were etymologies derived from the Greek Σκοτος, understood as meaning obscure, desolate, dark. In a single Mosaic moment of apocalyptic significance, all of that had changed, and in fact Scottish poverty could actually accentuate the status and implications of the Covenant. By 1606 Scots defended their church by claiming that it "makes Scotland, called otherwise but darknesse, the honorablest natioun under heaven" (David Calderwood, *History of the Kirk of Scotland*, ed. by Thomas Thomason, Wodrow Society [Edinburgh, 1842-1849], VI, p. 538; cf. pp. 528, 530. Also note William Camden, *Britannia*, trans. by Philemon Holland [London, 1610], p. 119). But Rutherford characteristically said it best: "The Lord hath changed the name of Scotland; they call us now no more 'Foresaken' nor 'Desolate', but our land is called 'Hephzibah' and 'Beulah', for the Lord delighteth in us, and this land is married to Himself" (*Letters*, p. 459).

## THOMAS BRIGHTMAN AND ENGLISH APOCALYPTIC TRADITION

AVIHU ZAKAI

In English apocalyptic tradition of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Thomas Brightman held a unique and important place. His exegesis of the Book of Revelation had a tremendous influence on the course of the Puritan movement in England before and during the Puritan Revolution, and the revolutionary solution he offered in terms of the relation between prophecy and history singularly inspired radical Puritans in England as well as in New England to attempt to realize in time and actions their millennial expectations and eschatological visions. Brightman's interpretation of Revelation in fact constituted a unique philosophy of history which supplied the Puritans with coherent perceptions concerning both the meaning of their time in providential history and the crucial role of the saints in the time of the millennium at hand. His essential assumption that through time and history the Kingdom of God would rise on earth, and that this world and not the next was the true field on which the whole mystery of the providential drama of all times would be revealed, created a new sense of religious and political obligations among the Puritans regarding their own decisive role in the cosmic battle between Christ and Antichrist. Brightman succeeded in replacing St. Augustine's dualistic view of the world by finding a point in time and history when the heavenly city and the earthly city would coalesce, or when the visible and invisible church would unite, and thus he immersed the millennium in time and history. Ultimately, Brightman's work raised a new historical consciousness in England in the first half of the seventeenth century. It aroused a sense of the imminent fulfillment of the prophecies of Revelation within time and history, a deep-seated conviction within the individual that his time was the time of the millennium at hand, and, consequently, a belief that it was the duty of the saints to engage themselves in aiding Christ to transform the world into the Kingdom of God<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> In the following discussion of the Book of Revelation, I owe much to William Lament's important study, *Godly Rule, Politics and Religion, 1603-1660* (London, 1969), which shows how essential Revelation was to the Puritan movement in England in the early seven-

The apocalyptic tradition in historiography is as old as the history of biblical text. Its essence is the interest in the relation between prophecy and history, or the relationship between sacred history and secular, profane history, and its aim is to reveal that the full meaning and validity of the latter derive solely from the providential pattern of the former. The goal of this tradition, therefore, is to liberate sacred history from the secular dimension of time – a liberation which occurs upon the fulfillment of prophecy. Among apocalyptic writings, the place of the Book of Revelation, or the Revelation of St. John the Divine, which is the last book of the New Testament and the only one which is an Apocalypse, is dominant and crucial. For with its prophecies and visions, this book unveiled the course of sacred history as a hidden history unfolding its pattern in world events and directed toward time and history to come, toward the future of the Christian faith, the destiny of the Church, Christ's Second Coming, the Millennium and the End of the World. It is important to note that the Book of Revelation is not a history of past events; it is, rather, prophetic history, envisioning the future. Contrary to other books of the New Testament, the Book of Revelation does not deal with the "golden age" of Christianity in the past, of those events surrounding the first coming of Christ, but with the "golden age" of Christianity to come, with the second coming of Christ and his reign on earth alongside his saints. In this scheme, the history of the church is liberated from the secular dimension of time, or profane history, wherein the church suffers in a world denying God as its creator and is projected into the sacred dimension of time, into that time when God or his Son makes the profane world holy again. The singularity of the Book of Revelation, therefore, rests in the fact that it directs attention away from the Christian drama of the past toward the Christian drama of the future. In the process, past history *per se* is de-emphasized, taking on significance only insofar as it relates to the unfolding drama of the future<sup>2</sup>.

Centuries of European history have been influenced by the Book of Revelation, for the meaningful solution it offers to the paradox of God's people being persecuted in God's world. In effect, in Revelation, St. John circumvents the entire problem posed by present persecutions: their meaning, obscure at the moment, will be made clear by events to come.

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teenth century, and to the excellent study of J.G.A. Pocock, "Time, History and Eschatology in the Thought of Thomas Hobbes", in his *Politics, Language and Time* (New York, 1973). See also Pocock's essay "Modes of Action and Their Pasts in Tudor and Stuart England", in *National Consciousness, History and Political Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Orest Ranum (Baltimore, 1975).

<sup>2</sup> On the issue of prophecy and history, see Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1969).

History has meaning, but that meaning will be determined by the future, not by the events of the present. And so, John concludes, far from constituting evidence of a grand paradox, the persecution and suffering of this world are part of God's plan yet unknown to man. Herein lies the profound impact of the Book of Revelation upon European history, for it directed believers to view their present experience in the light of Christ's second coming, the millennium, and the triumph of the Church – and hence in the context of providential history soon to be realized. Thus, for example, in his book *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, Norman Cohn vividly traces the “millennarianism that flourished amongst the rootless poor of western Europe between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries”, and the persistent belief in those centuries that “beyond the extermination of all evils lay the Millennium”<sup>3</sup>. For each age, then, the prophecies and visions of Revelation offered an interpretation according to which time and experience could be regarded within a providential context in which hidden sacred history unfolds in world events.

In the forming and shaping of apocalyptic tradition, which is based on the interpretation of time and history according to Revelation, the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century held a singular place. The break from the Roman Catholic Church generated new strength in the apocalyptic tradition. Thus, G.H. Williams shows in his book *The Radical Reformation*, the power of the millennial impulse among the many movements and groups of radical reformers of the sixteenth century, and the connections pertaining between their search for religious and social reform and the prophecies of the Book of Revelation. England was not outside this world of sixteenth-century millennial expectations, in which the struggle for religious reformation against Rome and the Pope was cast along lines derived from a reading of Revelation.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, from the very beginning of the Reformation in England, Prot-

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<sup>3</sup> Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium, Revolutionary Millenarian and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages*, rev. ed. (New York, 1970), pp. 17, 213.

<sup>4</sup> George H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia, 1962), *passim*. On millennial expectations and apocalyptic visions in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see: Bryan W. Ball, *A Great Expectation, Eschatological Thought in English Protestantism to 1660* (Leiden, 1975); Peter Toon, ed., *Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel: Puritan Eschatology* (Cambridge, 1970); Katherine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain 1530-1646* (Oxford, 1979); Charles Webster, *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine and Reform 1626-1660* (London, 1975); Paul Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon, English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War* (Toronto, 1978); and Joy B. Gilsdorf, *The Puritan Apocalypse: New English Eschatology in the Seventeenth Century*, Diss. Yale, 1964. For the association between the millennial and utopian thought, see: Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Millennium and Utopia: A Study in the Background of the Idea of Progress* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1949) and J.C. Davis, *Utopia and the Ideal Society: A Study of English Utopian Writing 1516-1700* (Cambridge, 1981).



estants found in Revelation a source for explaining the rift with the Catholic Church. Viewing this book as true prophecy, Englishmen, like Protestants on the continent, tended to draw from it the context of their own time and history. "Starting in the 1530s with John Bale, English reformers found in the apocalyptic mysteries of the Book of Revelation a framework for reinterpreting the history of Christianity and explaining the break from the Roman Catholic Church. Identifying the papacy with Antichrist and the Roman Catholic Church with Babylon, they pictured the reformation as a departure from the false church that derived its jurisdiction from the devil"<sup>5</sup>. Applying the prophecies of Revelation to the special conditions of England at that time, English reformers developed through their Biblical exegesis a unique philosophy of history, based on the apocalyptic visions presented by the Book of Revelation, in which England occupied a special position in the battle between Christ and Antichrist.

Most notable among sixteenth-century English Protestants attempting to relate contemporary historical events to the Book of Revelation was John Foxe, who used Revelation as the basis for his influential book *Actes and Monumentes*, commonly known as "The Book of Martyrs" (1563). In this religious classic of Elizabethan England, Foxe set his stories within an apocalyptic framework, one which was based on the Book of Revelation.

According to Foxe, England had always fought Antichrist, even from its earliest days. But along with many Marian exiles who had fled England during the reign of the Catholic Queen Mary, Foxe looked upon his own period as the one in which the fight between the godly and Antichrist would finally reach a climax. In his book he traced the ecclesiastical history of England from the apostolic times until the reign of Queen Elizabeth, emphasizing the unique role of England as the Elect Nation in God's divine plan. In "this account of Church history", wrote William Haller, Foxe showed that a "long succession of the native rulers down to Elizabeth" owed "their authority directly to divine appointment" and "made plain that by all the signs to be found in scripture and history the will of God was about to be fulfilled in England by a prince perfect in her obedience to her vocation, ruling a people perfect in their obedience to her authority"<sup>6</sup>.

Indeed, to Foxe, as to many other Protestants of that time, the early reign of Elizabeth offered renewed evidence of the destiny of England as the Elect Nation: the true reformation in England was being fulfilled through the imperial instrument – the prince – who was leading the fight against Antichrist in the world. But what if the prince failed to fulfill

<sup>5</sup> Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon*, book jacket.

<sup>6</sup> William Haller, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation* (London, 1963), pp. 224-225.

his or her divine mission to lead the true reformation in England and the nation as a whole against Antichrist? "The certainties of one age", noted R.H. Tawney, "are the problems of the next", and toward the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth, many Protestants and Puritans in England faced nothing but obstacles. For in spite of all their efforts, the prince had failed in the long-expected reformation of the Church of England<sup>7</sup>.

For the mass of English Protestants or Puritans, England had traditionally been accepted as the stage for the working out of the millennium, with the Church of England and its head, the English monarch, as the central agency in the drama. However, with the Puritan failure under Elizabeth, this "orthodox" relationship among the Church of England, the Prince, and the millennial prospect underwent a reassessment, and millennial expectations focusing on the Prince began to decline. This shift in the early seventeenth century toward centrifugal millenarianism was to a large extent the effect of the writing of one of the most famous contemporary commentators on the Book of Revelation – Thomas Brightman.

Foxe had influenced generations of Englishmen to look on England as the Elect Nation and to look to the Prince as God's instrument in the redemption process. Brightman likewise believed England to be the Elect Nation, but as he made clear in his *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos, or A Revelation of the Revelation* (1609), he no longer considered the Prince as occupying the decisive role in the English Reformation. "Brightman argued against expecting too much from a Godly Prince" because for him "the Godly Ruler frustrates, not advances, Godly Rule". Therefore, instead of looking to the Prince as the main instrument in the realization of England's singular role in providential history, Brightman rather described the duty of the believers as engaging themselves to advance the Reformation in England, and in this way he conditioned generations of Puritans to look upon themselves as God's elect people, or as the saints with a vital role in the time of the approaching millennium. Behind this turn-about lies the Puritan experience in Elizabethan England. The story of "the Elizabethan Puritan Movement" is in the first place the story of "the politics of the attempt, and of the failure" of Puritans "to secure reform in the whole body of the Church, and by means of public authority . . . to complete the English Reformation"<sup>8</sup>. Brightman's book can be seen on the one hand as evidence of the failure, in Puritan terms, to reform the Church of Eng-

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<sup>7</sup> R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (New York, 1954), p. 231; Lamont, *Godly Rule*, p. 25.

<sup>8</sup> Lamont, *Godly Rule*, p. 51; Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967), p. 13.

land under Elizabeth. On the other hand, however, his book is more than a mere description of the Prince's failure to lead the religious reformation. For his exegesis of Revelation offered, above all, a radical interpretation of the Revelation prophecies, an interpretation, moreover, that constituted a unique view or philosophy of history. And up to and during the Puritan Revolution, Brightman's interpretation of Revelation and his philosophy of history had a profound influence on Puritans.

Brightman's special role in English apocalyptic tradition resided in the fact that he had proposed a radical solution concerning the relation between prophecy and history, or between the prophecies of Revelation and the Puritan experience in England at the turn of the sixteenth century. The essence of his solution was the attempt to extract from the Book of Revelation the possibility, always present in the text, of a correlation or union between the Visible and the Invisible Church, and to place this relationship – always latent in the text – within the English historical context. In the English apocalyptic tradition preceding Brightman, John Bale, in his *The Image of Both Churches*, 1550, had taken "St. Augustine's idea of the two cities and transformed it into that of the two churches – one headed by Christ and the other by antichrist". Bale, in other words, retained strictly within time and history the realms between heaven and earth and made this dualism the essential feature of history until the second coming of Christ. Likewise, Foxe in his book followed Bale's dualistic view of history and time, adding to it his stress on England as the Elect Nation. However, as to the answer to the mystery of time or the fulfillment of Revelation, both Bale and Foxe saw this as lying in the future. That is, "Bale awaited the opening of the seventh seal, the opening of that time when the elect would glory in the fall of Babylon and the erection of New Jerusalem"; and Foxe likewise foresaw the role of the Elect Nation, led by a Protestant Prince, in fighting Antichrist in future times to come<sup>9</sup>.

With Brightman, the English apocalyptic tradition was transformed. For according to him, the age of millennium had already begun within time and history:

"for now is the time begun when Christ shal raigne in all the earth, having all his enemies round about subdued unto him and broken in peeces".

Brightman believed this in contrast to Bale, for example, because for him the voice of "last trumpet" had already sounded and blasted in history. Following Revelation, which states that "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished", or more specifically, that

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<sup>9</sup> Gilsdorf, *The Puritan Apocalypse*, p. 33; Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon*, pp. 15, 18.

“the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, the Kingdom of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 10:7; 11:15).

Brightman indeed thought himself alive in the time of the seventh trumpet which in Revelation followed the opening of the seventh seal. That is, he believed himself part of that time in history when the whole mystery of time and history would be revealed and the Kingdom of God would reign on earth. He identified the year 1555 as “some two or three years before the Seaventh Trumpets blast”. Thus, to him the accession of Elizabeth in 1558 was the year in which this trumpet sounded in history, and from Elizabeth’s accession onward was the time when the whole holistic drama of history would unfold:

“For now is the last Act, begun of most log & dolefull Tragedy, which shall wholly overflow with scourges, slaughters, destructions, but after this Theater is once removed, there shall come in roome of it most delightfull spectacle of perpetual peace, joyned with abundance of all good things”<sup>10</sup>.

Of course, the millennium might not finally arrive until long after Brightman’s lifetime, but the importance of his interpretation lay in the fact that he fixed for himself – and for many Puritans in the early seventeenth century – the early reign of Elizabeth as the period of the seventh trumpet. This period, it will be recalled from Revelation, is that time in which the entire dualistic structure of the universe is broken: a war, begun in heaven, spreads to earth, so that earth finally becomes the scene of the whole cosmic drama out of which emerges the Kingdom of God. This is the period, then, in which after many apocalyptic events, including the destruction of Babylon, the millennium is at hand. Thus, according to Brightman,

“*The time is at hand*; the Event of things immediately to be done . . . the things to come are no lesse certaine; But for us, who have seene the consent between the event and the Prophecy for the space of a thousand & five hundred yeares, that is, ever since the dayes of John, we can not possibly doubt, any longer touching those few events which yet remaine to be accomplished”<sup>11</sup>.

This sense of the millennium at hand, so characteristic of Brightman’s exegesis of Revelation and so different from previous apocalyptic commentaries, stems from the historical perspective he gave to the prophecies of Revelation. For according to Brightman, during the rule of Constantine – who made Christianity a church state in the Roman Empire – “the

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Brightman, *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos, or a Revelation of the Revelation* (Leiden, 1616), pp. 491, 502. (All quotations from Brightman are from the Leiden, 1616 edition.)

<sup>11</sup> Brightman, p. 1135.

Divell was bound . . . for thousand years''. In 1300, he maintained, the Devil or Satan had escaped from captivity and begun to wage war against Christ and his saints. And he cited the late seventeenth century as the time of the end of Antichrist (''the last end of Antichrist shall expire at the year 1686''). Thus, it was between these two periods that the battle between Christ and Antichrist transpired, in which the saints gathered around the Lord in his wars on Mount Zion. Throughout this period, therefore, the church paraded as the ''Militant Church'', gradually spreading the kingdom of Christ on earth through religious reformations against Satan and the Antichrist. But since according to the Book of Revelation Satan and his agents were to wage war against Christ for only 390 years, Brightman calculated that at the end of the seventeenth century, after the final destruction of Antichrist, the saints with Christ would rule on earth. Then, ''all nations shalbe at the Churches command, & that at a becke, requiring & taking lawes & ordinances from it, whereby they may be governed''<sup>12</sup>.

It is evident, then, that Brightman, as it were, immersed the millennium in the realm of history. From 1300 onward, he claimed, Christ and the Saints were engaged in the apocalyptic drama as foretold by Revelation, and world history from then on revealed the spreading of God's kingdom on earth. Consequently, by interpreting time and history on the basis of Revelation, Brightman emphasized the crucial role of the saints in this world. For the saints, reformation and a renewed covenant with the Lord no longer signified man's salvation alone but became a vital act in the cosmic battle on earth between Satan and Christ. Thus, when Brightman calculated that the blast of the seventh trumpet proclaiming the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth occurred in the year 1558, he infused a strong eschatological impulse into early seventeenth-century Puritan millennial discourse. Three decades after Brightman, Thomas Goodwin could write: ''This is the last time because it is the perfection of the other . . . and therefore seeing these are the last days, the nigher the day approacheth, the more shall we endeavour to do God service''<sup>13</sup>. Yet in order to infuse the millennium into the dimension of historical time, Brightman had to interpret the Book of Revelation in different ways from his predecessors.

According to E.L. Tuveson, ''the Protestants of the sixteenth century'' accepted St. Augustine's interpretation of Revelation, in which he stressed the view that ''the reign of the saints . . . is not to be earthly; it refers only to their glorified state in heaven''. But not Brightman. He in fact replaced

<sup>12</sup> Brightman, pp. 519, 569, 852, 1119.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Goodwin, ''Three Sermons on Heb. I, 1, 2'', in *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, ed. J.C. Miller (Edinburgh, 1861-1865), V, pp. 533-534.

St. Augustine's dualistic view of the world by finding a point in time and history when the heavenly city and the earthly city would coalesce, or when the visible and invisible Church would unite. For this reason he constantly warned against reading Revelation in dualistic cosmological terms: "*Heaven* here is not distinguished from earth in distance of places, but in the holiness of faith and manner". Or in another place:

"Heaven doth every where in this Book, signify the *universal Church* . . . because . . . it can have no more expresse image than this upon earth".

And when Brightman faced in Revelation the sentence, "And the armies *which were* in heaven followed" Christ (Rev. 19:14), he glossed, "that is, the Cittizens of the Holy Church uppon earth". Accordingly, to him the New Jerusalem was not in heaven and descending to earth from there,

"But as touching this *new-Jerusalem* . . . it is not that *Citie* which the Saintes shall enjoy in the Heaven . . . but that *Church*, that is to be looked upon earth, the most noble and pure of all other, that ever have been to that tyme"<sup>14</sup>.

By identifying the heaven of the Book of Revelation with earthly phenomena, Brightman was able to replace Augustine's dualistic heaven/earth view of the cosmos with his own view of a cosmos marked by an essential dualism *within* the earthly realm. Thus, the angels in Revelation were to him "those Ministers of the truth", while "the Person of Antichrist" was "not any certaine & singular man: but a long succession of many men". This reduction to the plane of earth of the dualistic outlook also carried important implications concerning the battle on earth between godly and profane people. When the Book of Revelation stated that "the Dragon was cast out upon the earth" (Rev. 12:9), Brightman identified those cast out as all

"out of the borders of true and Holy Church, not only among the profane nations, but also among the rest of Christian people, that was any wayes disagreeing from, or contrary to sincere piety . . . That which called heaven and earth, was called the Temple and the Court".

Thus the apocalyptic war that once pertained to the dualism of earth and heaven was now being played out within human society on earth. By replacing the old apocalyptic dualism of Augustine with his own *intra*-human mundane apocalyptic vision, Brightman generated new meanings in the search after true reformation in England in the early seventeenth century. In this new dualism, the Church struggled against those who "disagree to sincere piety" because they belong to Satan. In this view, the Dragon or Satan was within the present church, and the reforming church must cast

<sup>14</sup> Tuveson, *Millennium and Utopia*, p. 17; Brightman, pp. 526, 300, 1118, 115.

him out. Thus, according to Brightman, "obstinate sinners, which will not yeald to admonitions, are given up to *Satan* by the ecclesiastical censure, and are cast out of the Church"<sup>15</sup>. With this reformulation, Brightman bestowed upon the next generation of Puritans a formidable weapon.

But in order to transport the millennium into time and history, and to uphold his own dualistic view, Brightman also had to show that the Book of Revelation not only described events to come but also contained prophecies with actual historical substance. This he did by arguing that the events in the Book of Revelation, or the image of the seven churches there, corresponded to historical events in past and present. Hence, his claim that the seventh trumpet had indeed blasted in 1558. "These seaven Epistles", wrote Brightman, "respected not onely the present condition of the seaven Cities, but do . . . comprehend the ages following for a long tyme"<sup>16</sup>. Consequently, if in Revelation the churches, except Philadelphia, moved from the ancient purity of apostolic times into decline, they also moved in time – according to the holistic pattern of this book – toward history's climax and the apocalyptic events of the second coming of Christ. Likewise, according to Brightman, the history of the Church on earth was the story of the Church's approach toward that time when the visible and invisible Church would unite on earth.

Brightman's holistic interpretation of history is significant for its enormous influence in England<sup>17</sup>. It was through his interpretation of the Book of Revelation that Puritans grasped the meaning of their time and their unique place in history. By correlating visions described in the Book of Revelation with events in time and history, Brightman envisaged the Kingdom of God to be within the framework of history; and through his construction of the Church's history according to the Book of Revelation, from the first until the second coming of Christ, Brightman inspired Puritans to look upon their time as that of the seventh trumpet.

With Brightman's novel interpretation that with the accession of Elizabeth to the throne in 1558 the seventh trumpet blew, a new historical consciousness arose in England in the early seventeenth century concerning

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<sup>15</sup> Brightman, pp. 618, 585, 520, 143. In chapter eleven of Revelation, an angel says to St. John: "Rise, and measure the temple of God . . . But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not, for it was given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot" (Rev. 11:1, 2).

<sup>16</sup> Brightman, p. 155.

<sup>17</sup> A holistic interpretation of history is one that sees history as moving towards a redemptive, eschatological goal in or beyond history. That is, a view that charges history with religious significance and, given the fact that history has been created by God, is guided by Divine Providence from beginning to an end. See, in relation to this kind of historical interpretation, K.R. Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (London, 1969) and Sir Isaiah Berlin, *Historical Inevitability* (London, 1955).

the imminent fulfillment of the prophecies of Revelation and a sense of the millennium at hand. It was still left to Brightman, however, to describe the role that England would assume in the providential history which was about to reach its zenith with the approaching millennium and the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon earth. In his delineation of church history, Brightman endeavored to link each church in Revelation to an actual historical counterpart. Thus, he applied each epistle of Christ to his churches in Revelation to a particular historical period of time. Each church in Revelation, then, symbolized for him a certain period in the history of the church from Christ's first coming until the Second Coming, yet when he came to identify the sixth church of Revelation, Philadelphia, God's only true reformed church and the one to which Christ promised that he "will write upon [her] the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem" (Rev. 3:12) – he cited a historical correlation not of England, but rather of "the Church of Helvetia, Suevia, Geneve, Franncce, Scotland"<sup>18</sup>. Brightman's refusal to associate the Church of England with Philadelphia is perhaps the clearest indication of his radical departure from the apocalyptic tradition in England preceding him, and especially of his distance from Foxe's vision of England as the Elect Nation in providential history.

Writing almost half a century after the accession of Elizabeth and the establishment of the Elizabethan Settlement, Brightman was fully aware of the Puritan failure to reform the Church of England, and, disappointed by the Prince's unwillingness to reform the church, he chose to identify the Church of England not with Philadelphia but rather with Laodicea. In this manner, Brightman radically transformed England's role in providential history from Foxe's Elect Nation into that of the sinful church in Revelation which rejected God's word and will and was therefore warned by the Lord that He would "spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:16). If Laodicea was England, as Brightman believed, then Christ's prophecies about Laodicea in Revelation applied equally to England. In that case, a special punishment awaited England – the historical Laodicea – in addition to the general destruction promised by God in Revelation to all who refused to acknowledge him. For in the end, all churches but Philadelphia would be destroyed in the final judgement. Yet Laodicea faced a double specter: Christ would cast it from his mouth to Satan, and it would be consumed in the general conflagration along with other churches not implementing full reformation.

Ultimately, in terms of the Puritan movement, Brightman's correlation between England and Laodicea raised a deep sense of crisis concerning

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<sup>18</sup> Brightman, pp. 139, 140, 142-145, 155.



England's role in providential history. And indeed this was a crisis of terrifying proportions, for with the Puritans' hopes in the reforming zeal of the monarch fading rapidly during the reign of James I and Charles I, and with the Church of England being corrupted, many feared that England would soon be called to account. In the scenario described by Brightman, with England as Laodicea, England could expect nothing but the righteous ire of God. Fear before this divine wrath was very real to generations of Puritans who regarded the Book of Revelation as God's word and as historical prophecy. Yet it is the prevalence with which England is associated with Laodicea in Puritan writings which suggests just how important a part Brightman played in transforming the role of England in providential history from Foxe's concept of the Elect Nation to that of doomed Laodicea upon which the final judgement of God was merely a matter of time. To a large extent, the entire course of the Puritan movement up to and during the Puritan Revolution was determined by Brightman's correlation between England and Laodicea.

In the first place, his correlation led to the migration to New England of thousands of Puritans during the 1630s with the aim of saving themselves from doomed Laodicea, or England. In the second place, the Puritan Revolution in England must be viewed in the light of the Puritans' attempt to bring England back to the center of providential history, from corrupt Laodicea to Philadelphia, and consequently to build in England the New Jerusalem. Thus, by identifying England with Laodicea, and given the fact that he already refused to accord the Prince the dominant role in the reformation of England, Brightman directed Puritans to take upon themselves – the godly – the main responsibility for executing the true reformation. In short, the Puritan commonwealth in New England and the Puritan Revolution in England are evidence of efforts made to fulfill the role of the Saint in providential history by aiding Christ against Antichrist.

We cannot conclude our discussion of Brightman's role in English apocalyptic tradition without mentioning his views concerning the Jews. These views were later to constitute a determining factor in the Jews' readmission to England during the Protectorate. As we have seen earlier, the crucial issue in apocalyptic interpretation is the question of the nature of time, and its relation to the apocalypse, since if the Book of Revelation is to have any real significance it must be understood within the context of the relationship between apocalyptic prophecies and the process of history. Related to the concept of time in the Book of Revelation is the matter of the seven Vials, or judgements, which are to lead to the final judgement before the millennium. In English apocalyptic tradition preceding Brightman, the vision of the seven Vials was regarded as complementary to that

of the voice of the Trumpets. Brightman, however, offered a radical interpretation: according to him this vision is rather consecutive to the Trumpets – that is, from 1558 onward. The significance of this view lies in the fact that it directed one to look upon events following Elizabeth's accession to the throne as a sign of the Vials. According to this approach, four Vials, or judgements, had already fallen, beginning in 1560; the fifth Vial was related to the destruction of Rome which was to occur in 1650; and after this would come the sixth Vial, which concerned the future conversion of the Jews. Thus, by correlating events described in Revelation with historical time, Brightman envisaged the Kingdom of God within the framework of history; and he consequently believed that the literal conversion of the Jews would follow rather than precede the defeat of Antichrist. With the millennium occurring in time and history, and with the conversion of the Jews but one part of the providential drama, it follows in the same scheme of things that conversion should literally occur at one point of time within history<sup>19</sup>.

Ultimately, Brightman's exegesis of Revelation constituted a unique and influential philosophy of redemptive history in which the millennium, or the advent of the Kingdom of God, was considered to be within time and history. According to Brightman's apocalyptic interpretation, England played a crucial role in providential history. His refusal to accord the Church of England the title of Philadelphia was responsible for the urgent need felt by the Puritans to re-evaluate their country's role in this history. And his correlating England with Laodicea was the main cause for the rise of Puritan fears that God's Judgement upon England was imminent. The very extent to which Brightman's identification of England with Laodicea was quoted in England before and during the Puritan Revolution demonstrates how greatly it alarmed the Puritans, who were thus led to fear the impending punishment of England by God in his boundless wrath.

It is Brightman's interpretation which was also largely responsible for the migration, prior to the Puritan Revolution, of thousands of Puritans who removed themselves from foredoomed Laodicea – or England – with the aim of building in the wilderness of America the New Jerusalem. Reformation or destruction, this was the clear application Puritans drew from Brightman's exegesis. Therefore, when the road was later re-opened in England for Puritans to engage in experiments in holiness toward fulfilling England's role in providential history, they turned without hesitation to the task of reforming England. They did this with the urgent sense of the millennium at hand and with an awareness of the singular role of the saints at that specific point in time. For the seventh trumpet had already

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<sup>19</sup> Brightman, pp. 711, 851, 836.

blasted in time and history, proclaiming the approach of that blessed end in which the whole mystery of time would be revealed and Christ with his faithful would reign on earth, a time in which the kingdom of earth would become the Kingdom of God. This was the sense that Brightman infused into English apocalyptic tradition in the early seventeenth century.

POLITICAL CONCEPTS IN THE WORLD OF THE  
PORTUGUESE JEWS OF AMSTERDAM DURING THE  
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: THE PROBLEM OF  
EXCLUSION AND THE BOUNDARIES OF  
SELF-IDENTITY

YOSEF KAPLAN

During the seventeenth century the Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam brought the heritage of Iberian culture with them into the bosom of Judaism. That culture was rich, varied, and encompassed many intellectual and social fields. Transposed to new conditions, sometimes with the admixture of traditional Jewish concepts, that tradition sometimes caused tension and even conflicted with certain Jewish values.

Perusal of the lists of books owned and read by those Jews shows that they were extremely interested in political literature. Daniel Swetschinski, who analyzed the catalogues of books owned by Jean Cardoso and Joseph Jenes, and who also noted the books referred to in works written by members of the Jewish community, reached the following conclusion: "Contemporary political thought may have been a more or less general Portuguese-Jewish interest whose depth and focus varied according to the individual's educational background"<sup>1</sup>. Indeed while Spinoza's systematic approach is quite different from the eclecticism of merchants and property owners among the community, they too displayed lively interest in political thought, and increasingly one realizes that such an interest was an integral part of the cultural life of the Portuguese Jewish community of Amsterdam.

Naturally the political thought of Spain at that time occupied a central place in their worldview. Not only were the works of Diego de Saavedra Fajardo, Antonio Pérez, Francisco de Quevedo y Villegas, and Baltasar Gracián y Morales found in Spinoza's library<sup>2</sup>, but whole passages of the Spanish political writing of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are

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<sup>1</sup> D.M. Swetschinski, "The Portuguese Jews of Seventeenth Century Amsterdam – Cultural Continuity and Adaptation", in F. Malino and Ph. Cohen Albert, eds., *Essays in Modern Jewish History. A Tribute to Ben Halpern* (London and Toronto, 1982), p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Y.H. Yerushalmi, "Spinoza's Remarks on the Existence of the Jewish People", *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities*, VI (1984), pp. 195 ff. (in Hebrew).

embedded in the works of authors and rabbis of the Portuguese Jewish community of Amsterdam. J.A. van Praag in his classic article "Divided Souls" noted that phenomenon nearly forty years ago, and after him H. Méchoulán reached fascinating conclusions in his valuable research on Abraham Israel Pereyra<sup>3</sup>.

Spanish political literature, which, to a large degree, was moralistic in character, had a primarily educational and religious function, not only in Iberian society but also in the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish diaspora<sup>4</sup>. In their struggle against the heterodox tendencies which had found a foothold in Sephardic Jewish life, the members of the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish communities in western Europe borrowed ideas from the Spanish political thought of the seventeenth century. One of the principal characteristics of that thought is the stubborn campaign against Machiavellianism, viewed as the categorical denial of the ideas of the Christian state, which, above all else, ought to embody religious values<sup>5</sup>. In controversies with Christianity the Portuguese Jews also used concepts common in Iberian political literature. The writings of Isaac Orobio, for example, show the effort made by the former New Christians to translate their theological arguments into terms laden with immediate meaning in the political language of Spain at that time<sup>6</sup>.

Regarding Spinoza, Y.H. Yerushalmi has noted in his important study on "Spinoza's Remarks on the Existence of the Jewish People", that "scholars, in their search for the sources of Spinoza's political thought, generally mention the names of English thinkers (Thomas Hobbes and John Locke), Dutchmen (Hugo Grotius), and Italians (Machiavelli), but they do not refer to Spanish thinkers"<sup>7</sup>. Yerushalmi, with his sharp historical intuition, speculated that the source both of Spinoza's famous dictum that it was the hatred of the gentiles which had apparently maintained the Jews in existence, and also his distinction between Jews who converted in Spain and then assimilated into Christian society and those who convert-

<sup>3</sup> J.A. van Praag, *Gespleten Zielen* (Groningen, 1948) [in Spanish: "Almas en litigio", *Clavileño*, I (1950), pp. 14-26]; H. Méchoulán, "Abraham Pereyra, juge des marranes et censeur de ses coreligionnaires à Amsterdam au temps de Spinoza", *Revue des Etudes Juives*, CXXXVIII (1979), pp. 391-400; *idem*, "Diego de Estella, une source espagnole de l'oeuvre d'Abraham Pereyra", *Studia Rosenthaliana*, XV (1981), pp. 178-187.

<sup>4</sup> On the character of that political literature in Spain in the seventeenth century, see J.A. Maravall, *La Teoría Española del Estado en el Siglo XVII* (Madrid, 1944), pp. 19-69; for the use of that literature by Portuguese Jews in the seventeenth century, many examples can be found in Abraham Israel Pereyra, *La Certeza del Camino* (Amsterdam, 5425 [1666]); and *Espejo de la Vanidad del Mundo* (Amsterdam, 5431 [1671]).

<sup>5</sup> J.A. Maravall, *op. cit.*, pp. 30 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Y. Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism: the Life and Work of Isaac Orobio de Castro* (Jerusalem, 1982), pp. 282-285 (in Hebrew).

<sup>7</sup> Yerushalmi, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

ed in Portugal and always remained separate from the rest of the population was thoroughly Iberian<sup>8</sup>. Indeed we can now furnish convincing proof of Yerushalmi's assumption and show that the statement in Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* is almost completely identical in content to a passage written by Martín González de Cellorigo in 1619:

Spinoza:

"Cum Rex Hispaniae olim Judaeos coegit Regni Religionem admittere, vel in exilium ire, per plurimi Judaei pontificiorum Religionem admiserunt; sed quia iis, qui religionem admiserunt, omnia Hispanorum naturalium privilegia concessa sunt, iique omnibus honoribus digni existimati sunt, statim ita se Hispanis immiscuerunt, ut pauco post tempore nullae eorum reliquiae manserit, neque ulla memoria. At plane contra iis contigit, quos Rex Lusitanorum religionem sui imperii admittere coegit, qui semper, quamvis ad religionem conversi, ab omnibus separati vixerunt, nimirum quia eos omnibus honoribus indignos declaravit"<sup>9</sup>.

Cellorigo:

"Y el ver efectos tan contrarios en los unos y tan diferentes de los otros da que juzgar: pues vemos en Castilla *ya casi extincta esta nación, y a todos los della honrados y estimados* y en grandes puestos, muy Católicos y tan aventajados en la Fe que dexan muy atrás a muchos que se precian de Christianos viejos; y, por el contrario, en Portugal se ven las calamidades y trabajos que al presente corren, dignas de remedio. Y lo que, por los discursos y motivos que [en] tantos años de Letrado de Inquisición, la experiencia me ha enseñado: entiendo que esto procede de no averse hecho en Portugal lo que es tan a propósito para este punto, como se ha hecho en Castilla"<sup>10</sup>.

It turns out that Spinoza's tendentious account and his distortion of basic historical data, at least regarding Spain, did not result from the effect he wished to create in order to prove that the hatred of the gentiles was what sustained the existence of the Jews. Yerushalmi's surprise that Spinoza had written about the laws of purity of blood as though they were a phenomenon unique to Portugal, not even hinting that they originated and developed in Spain<sup>11</sup>, can now be directed at the treatise of González de Cellorigo, who, despite his intimate familiarity with the situation in Spain, wrote what he did.

The deeper one delves into the literary sources of the Spanish-Portuguese Jewish diaspora, the stronger one's impression becomes that many of the keys for the understanding of their views and concepts are

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 181 ff.

<sup>9</sup> B. Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, ed. C. Gebhardt (*Opera*, III) (Heidelberg, 1924), pp. 56-57.

<sup>10</sup> See Martín de Cellorigo, *Alegación en que se funda la Iusticia y merced que algunos particulares del Reyno de Portugal*, etc. (Madrid, 1619). That work is included in its entirety in I.S. Révah, "Le plaidoyer en faveur des 'Nouveau-Chrétiens' portugais du licencié Martín González de Cellorigo (Madrid, 1619)", *Revue des Etudes Juives*, CXXII (1963), pp. 279-398. See also *ibid.*, p. 367.

<sup>11</sup> Yerushalmi, *op. cit.*, p. 182 ff.

found in the Iberian Peninsula. That applies not only to concepts expressed in the works of philosophers and authors, but also, and principally, to those common in the current speech or the language of the regulations of the community and its associations.

For example, a key concept in the regulations of the Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam during the seventeenth century was the term “*conservação*” (in Portuguese) or “*conservación*” (in Spanish), meaning conservation. The fixed formula appearing in the community register when new members of the *maamad* were chosen is as follows: “e depois de haverem discursado o que convinha para a *conservação* do K.K.” (“after having discussed what is necessary for the conservation of this holy congregation”)<sup>12</sup>; and when the members of any new *maamad* were sworn in, according to the congregational regulations they were required to recite the following: “Permita o Sr darlhes graça para acertarem en tudo para que se *consERVE* o Kahal em Paz” (“May the Lord give them grace so that they succeed at everything and preserve the congregation in peace”)<sup>13</sup>; and we frequently find expressions such as “para a *conservação* e bom governo” (“for the conservation and good government”)<sup>14</sup>; etc. The literature written by the Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam is replete with examples demonstrating that we are truly dealing with a central concept in the political terminology of the group. Moreover, that concept is not translated from any Hebrew term in what is generally called the Jewish chancellery language, *i.e.*, the language of Jewish community regulations at that time, thus corroborating our impression that it was unique to the western Sephardic diaspora at that time.

The term “conservation” had considerable political significance during the seventeenth century. Economic crises, religious and social ferment, and changes in scientific views created a widespread feeling of instability and uncertainty. Confronted by change sweeping everything before it, the people’s main problem was how to “be conserved”<sup>15</sup>. Saavedra Fajardo, one of the most important political thinkers of the Spanish kingdom during the seventeenth century, viewed the decline of the Spanish monarchy as inevitable, thus the proper function of the rulers was to retard that process with the technical means appropriate to “conservation”<sup>16</sup>. That is

<sup>12</sup> See the archive of the Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam, in the Amsterdam Municipal Archives (henceforth GAA, PA 334), in the *Livro dos Acordos da Nação e Ascamos* (No. 19), fol. 63.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 64.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 252.

<sup>15</sup> J.A. Maravall, *Estudios de Historia del Pensamiento Español – Siglo XVII* (Madrid, 1975), pp. 167-172.

<sup>16</sup> D. de Saavedra Fajardo, *Idea de un Príncipe político-cristiano. Representada en cien empresas*, in *Obras de Don Diego de Saavedra*, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles (Madrid, 1920), pp. 165, 167, 174-175.

also the tone adopted by Fernández de Navarrete in his *Conservación de las Monarquías* (*The Conservation of Monarchies*)<sup>17</sup>. In that literature the rulers are frequently called “the physicians of the republic” for their task is to conserve the state and prolong its life. The monarch must know “how to pretend”, “how to hide his intentions”, and “how not to reveal his mood”. In confronting dangers, direct action to forestall them was not suggested, but rather the effort to adapt to the dangers, thus disarming them. That political philosophy was undoubtedly based on the morality of conformism, assuming that only by means of it can one cope with the evil inherent in the human race<sup>18</sup>.

There is no doubt concerning the source from which the Spanish and Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam drew their political terminology, just as there is no doubt that they too shared the general feeling of instability and change affecting every area of life, a feeling which was exacerbated in their case by the tendency towards disintegration within their congregation and the entire *nação*.

In order to build up a community based on the values of Jewish law and tradition, in spite of the difficulties and crises accompanying them on their path back to Judaism, those Jews had to refrain from direct action to forestall the dangers lying in wait for them, instead adapting the political morality of conformity, that which advocated adaptation to dangers as a tried and true method for averting their threats. But conformism, ostensibly intended to permit the conservation of the traditional framework without disruption, bore within it the seeds of change in the traditional way of life itself<sup>19</sup>.

My late teacher, Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson, noted the sentiments of the Spanish exiles towards their Christian persecutors and torturers at the very time of the expulsion, particularly towards their political methods:

“The generation of the exile sensed the power of the unity of Spanish Christian society in a kingdom consolidated by religion, where religion binds the nation together . . . It sometimes appears that they would have affirmed and agreed with the political course of the Catholic monarchy and their generation, if that course had served Judaism and not Christianity”.

Later Ben-Sasson concludes: “The exiles were therefore of the opinion that any believing monarchy naturally had to endeavor to impose its

<sup>17</sup> Fernández de Navarrete, *Conservación de las Monarquías* (Madrid, 1626), printed in the previously cited collection of the works of Saavedra Fajardo, *supra*, n. 16, pp. 449-546.

<sup>18</sup> J.A. Maravall, *Estudios de Historia*, etc., p. 172; cf. Y. Kaplan, “The Portuguese Community of Amsterdam in the 17th Century: Between Tradition and Change”, *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities*, VII (1985), pp. 195 ff. (in Hebrew).

<sup>19</sup> Kaplan, *op. cit.*, *supra*, n. 18, pp. 175 ff.



correct belief on all its inhabitants. At the time of the expulsion they left behind a splendid kingdom built upon correct methods (but for the sake of a lie)''<sup>20</sup>.

The physician Rabbi Avraham Çalom of Tarrega, who lived at the time of the expulsion, offers a fine presentation of the argument that served the Catholic monarchs in expelling the Jews, clearly considering it to be legitimate in every respect:

''For it is unworthy of a king, in that he is a king, to maintain a nation unless it be of the same religion, since the king should be a cause of the maintenance of the religion, not for its destruction. And in that the religion of that nation [the Jews] is different from that of the king's nation, he ought to destroy them. For the king is a king in order to unite the people of his kingdom and to have opinions agree with him, not to have them disagree with him''<sup>21</sup>.

The exiles and their descendants viewed the methods of the Catholic kings with open admiration, particularly regarding the methods of dealing with the phenomena of heresy and sacrilege which were then plaguing the Iberian Peninsula. One has the impression that in the Spanish-Portuguese Jewish diaspora Spanish political customs were considered exemplary, quite frequently inspiring solutions to the problem of consolidating their identity after generations of living in apostasy, with all that entailed.

Emphasis upon Jewish superiority over the other nations is a central motif in the writings of the members of the Sephardic diaspora during the seventeenth century, and one must view it against the background of the ethnocentricity prevalent in Spain during the same period. Even if one concedes that the notion of Jewish chosenness is as old as the Jewish people, an examination of the writings of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews reveals expressions and ideas remarkably similar to those found in Spanish writings of the day.

One rather blunt expression of that tendency is found in Menasseh ben Israel's petition to Oliver Cromwell, ''*To His Highnesse the Lord Protector of the Common-Wealth of England, Scotland and Ireland. The Humble Addresses*'', published in 1655, at the height of his efforts to obtain the return of the Jews to England:

''Three things, if it please your Highness, there are that make a strange Nation wel-beloved amongst the Natives of a land where they dwell (as the defect of those three things make them hatefull.) viz. *Profit*, they may receive from them, *Fidelity* they hold towards their Princes; and the *Noblenes* and purity of

<sup>20</sup> H.H. Ben Sasson, ''The Generation of the Spanish Exile on its Fate'', *Zion*, XXVI (1961), pp. 53, 59 (in Hebrew).

<sup>21</sup> Avraham Çalom, *Neveh Shalom* (Constantinople, 5298 [1538]), fol. 72b. On that author see Y. Baer, *Die Juden im christlichen Spanien*, vol. I (Berlin, 1929), p. 862. Cf. H.H. Ben Sasson, *op. cit.*, p. 53, n. 150.

their blood. Now when I shall have made good, that all these three things are found in the Jewish Nation, I shall certainly persuade your Highnesse, that with a favorable eye . . . you shall be pleased to receive again the Nation of the Jews, who in time past lived in that island''<sup>22</sup>.

The third virtue mentioned in this passage is rather surprising. There is no question but that its mention here is Menasseh ben Israel's original contribution to Jewish apologetics during the seventeenth century. Regarding "profit" and "fidelity" he bases his argument on Simone Luzzatto, *Discorso circa il stato de gli Hebrei et in particolar dimoranti nell'inclita citta di Venezia* (1638)<sup>23</sup> without mentioning him by name. However, with regard to "Noblenes and the purity of their blood", the opinion he expresses is entirely unrelated to the writings of the Venetian rabbi or any other Jewish author. Moreover, although Menasseh ben Israel devoted two chapters of his work to profit and fidelity, he limits discussion of the third virtue to a simple and rather short remark at the end. He did not explicitly consider purity of blood or define its significance:

"Now, having proved the two former Points, I could adde a third, viz. of the Nobility of the Jews: but because that Point is enough known amongst all Christians, as lately yet it hath been most worthily and excellently shewed and described in a certain Book called, *The Glory of Iehuda and Israel*, dedicated to our Nation by that worthy Christian Minister Mr. Henry Jessey, (1653, in Duch) where this matter is set out at large. And by Mr. Edw. Nicholas Gentleman, in his book, called, *An Apologie for the Honorable Nation of the Iews, and all the Sons of Israel* (1648 in English). Therefore I will forebeare, etc.'"<sup>24</sup>.

Menasseh ben Israel directed his reader's attention to those philo-Semitic works of his time, written in praise of the Jewish people, but the concept of purity of blood was not of their manufacture. That concept came to him directly from the Iberian heritage. The Spanish and Portuguese devised the laws of purity of blood, *pureza de sangre* or *limpiezas de sangre*, in reaction to the penetration of their society by a large number of new Jewish converts to Catholicism<sup>25</sup>. C. Sánchez Albornoz and A. Castro

<sup>22</sup> Fol. 1. See the facsimile edition of that work in L. Wolf, *Menasseh ben Israel's Mission to Oliver Cromwell* (London, 1901), pp. 73-103, see also p. 81.

<sup>23</sup> On the connection between that work of Menasseh ben Israel and the work of Luzzatto, see B. Ravid, "How Profitable the Nation of the Jews Are: the Humble Addresses of Menasseh ben Israel and the *Discorso* of Simone Luzzatto", in J. Reinhartz and D. Swetschinski, eds., *Mystics, Philosophers and Politicians. Essays in Jewish Intellectual History in Honor of Alexander Altmann* (Durham, 1982), pp. 159-180.

<sup>24</sup> Menasseh ben Israel, *The Humble Addresses*, fol. 23; L. Wolf, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

<sup>25</sup> On that topic see A.A. Sicroff, *Les Controverses des Statuts de Pureté de Sang en Espagne du XVI<sup>e</sup> au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1960); cf. H. Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition* (London, 1965), pp. 117-136; Y.H. Yerushalmi, *Assimilation and Racial Anti-Semitism: the Iberian and the German Models*, The Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture 26 (New York, 1982), pp. 10-16.

tried to prove, each in his own way, that the concept of purity of blood derived from Judaism and was introduced into Spanish society by the *conversos* themselves, but that argument has been refuted utterly, for it has no factual basis, being the product of ignorance of Jewish law and an incorrect reading of medieval halakhic sources<sup>26</sup>.

In early modern Spain, imbued with messianic fervor and a feeling of religious mission, the absolute purity of Christian origins became a social issue of primary urgency. Only those belonging to an old Christian family with no "New Christians" of Jewish or Moslem origin in their family tree were thought to have utterly Christian origins, that is, to be of *pure blood*<sup>27</sup>. In contrast to traditional religious laws, according to which converts and their children were considered to be Christians in every respect, entitled to the same rights as "old" Christians, the regulations of *limpiezas de sangre* stated that it was not faith which determined the extent of one's rights but rather one's family origins. Anyone of Jewish ancestry was ineligible for participation in certain areas of society and the government. In the mid-sixteenth century laws of purity of blood were extended to almost all the public institutions of Spain. A Spaniard who sought appointment to a government municipal office, a religious or military order, the *colegios mayores* of the university, and the like, had to receive certification from the Inquisition testifying to the purity of his blood, that is, that he had no taint of Jewish or Moslem blood.

The basis of that approach was the view that a New Christian or a "Portuguese", descended from forced converts, endangered the integrity of Spanish society because of his ties with Judaism, and that integrity was a precondition for Spain's messianic mission. Thus during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries purity of blood became a major criterion in determining one's good name (*honra*), and the effort to prove the purity of one's origins was one of the most pronounced traits of Spanish society at that time. The system of purity of blood, a decidedly Spanish invention, was later adopted in Portugal too<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> A. Castro, *La realidad histórica de España* (México, 1982<sup>8</sup>), pp. 34 ff.; C. Sánchez Albornoz, *España: un enigma histórico*, vol. II (Buenos Aires, 1962), pp. 284 ff.; and also see the criticism of Netanyahu against Castro's claim regarding the "Jewish origin" of the concept of "purity of blood" in Spain: B. Netanyahu, "Américo Castro and his View of the Origins of the Pureza de Sangre", *American Academy for Jewish Research, Jubilee Volume*, vol. II (Jerusalem, 1980), pp. 397-457; cf. Baer's criticism of the views of Castro and Sánchez Albornoz concerning the "Jewish roots" of the Spanish Inquisition: Y. Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, vol. II (Philadelphia, 1966), pp. 444-456.

<sup>27</sup> A.A. Sicroff, *op. cit.*, pp. 28 ff., 290 ff.; cf. H. Méchoulán, *Le Sang de l'autre ou l'honneur de Dieu. Indiens, juifs et morisques au Siècle d'Or* (Paris, 1979), pp. 126 ff.; 204 ff.

<sup>28</sup> Y.H. Yerushalmi, "Spinoza's Remarks", *op. cit.*, pp. 181 ff.; Y. Kaplan, "Jews and Judaism in the Political and Social Thought of Spain in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries", in Sh. Almog, ed., *Antisemitism Through the Ages* (Jerusalem, 1980), pp. 173-180 (in Hebrew).

How then are we to relate to Menasseh ben Israel's remarks? Were they, perhaps, a slip of the pen? Or a careless use of a common phrase? Or perhaps we are in the presence of a more complex phenomenon, one of ideological and social import among the Portuguese Jews in Amsterdam at that time?

We incline to view Menasseh ben Israel's expression as a symptom of a social and cultural phenomenon typical of the victims of the laws of *limpiezas de sangre* after they reached a safe haven: when they returned to the faith of their fathers, the former secret Jews borrowed the infamous concept from their persecutors, for it now helped them define their own identity. Here we have an example of *appropriation*, as a direct result of what René Girard called *la mimesis de l'antagonisme*<sup>29</sup>.

Imperial Spain, disseminating Christianity to the ends of the earth, locked in struggle with heresy at home and abroad, saw itself as the heir of the chosen people of Biblical times. Spain's decline in the seventeenth century not only failed to weaken that sense of superiority, among several Spanish thinkers it actually strengthened faith in the mission of their homeland as the standard bearer of Catholic Christianity<sup>30</sup>. Many writers in Spain repeated the idea that the Spanish nation was the heir of the Children of Israel in receiving the "grace of election". H. Méchoulán called our attention to the matter of "*la concurrence dans l'élection divine*"<sup>31</sup>. The former New Christians who, as secret Jews, had seen how their persecutors had usurped divine election, attempted, upon their open return to the faith of their fathers, to restore the glory of the past and divine election to their previous bearers.

In 1679, Isaac Cardoso, who returned to Judaism and settled in Verona at the time Menasseh ben Israel was negotiating with Cromwell, published a book singing the praises of the "chosen people of Israel", calling it *Las Excelencias de los Hebreos*, following the example of the "excelencias" that were published in Spain in honor of the Spanish monarchy and its people, and the similarity in terminology and substance between Cardoso's book and those Spanish works is patent<sup>32</sup>. Cardoso did not neglect to mention in his book that

"The Hebrews are of the most noble blood, and their family tree is extremely ancient. . . . Because of the antiquity, their election, their purity, and their isolation, the Jews are the most noble nation on the face of the earth"<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> R. Girard, *Deux choses cachées depuis la fondation du monde* (Paris, 1978), p. 35.

<sup>30</sup> H. Méchoulán, *Le Sang de l'autre*, pp. 143 ff.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Y.H. Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto. Isaac Cardoso: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Marranism and Jewish Apologetics* (New York and London, 1971), pp. 357 ff.

<sup>33</sup> Yshac Cardoso, *Las Excelencias de los Hebreos* (Amsterdam, 1679), p. 364.

Cardoso's words were written in the context of the apologetic argument that the Jewish religion does not proselytize nor do Jews seek to win souls for their faith among the gentiles: "We wish to state very clearly that Jews do not try to persuade gentiles to accept their doctrine, for why should they do such a thing? Certainly not to gain nobility and splendor"<sup>34</sup>. The examination of various documents and writings of the Spanish and Portuguese diaspora, particularly Menasseh ben Israel's congregation in Amsterdam, shows that not only did they refrain from actively proselytizing, they also had a principled objection to the conversion of Christians who were not of Jewish origin. It is difficult to maintain that that objection was derived only from extreme fidelity to the traditional process of conversion which demands rejection first, as written in the Talmud (Yebamot 47a): "A person who comes to convert at this time should be told, 'What did you see that makes you want to convert? Don't you know that in these times the people of Israel are afflicted, oppressed, harried, and persecuted, and that suffering comes to them?' etc."<sup>35</sup>. The Portuguese Jewish community of Amsterdam, including its officials and its rabbis, was not enthusiastic about opening its gates to any stranger who expressed a desire to join it, and in every single instance they undertook a strict, detailed, and exacting investigation into the origins and motives of the candidate for conversion. We know, for example, of the case of Lorenzo Escudero, a musician and entertainer from Andalusia, apparently of Moorish extraction, who settled in Amsterdam in the mid-seventeenth century and wished to become a Jew<sup>36</sup>. The leaders of the Portuguese community rejected him. Apparently he had previously lived in The Hague and there too he had been rejected by the local Portuguese Jewish community. The testimony of three Portuguese Jews in this matter reveals their general policy: "Spaniards come and wish to be received as Jews, and we refuse"<sup>37</sup>. Escudero finally turned to the Ashkenazic community, and after they agreed to convert him, he was circumcised in November 1658 and changed his name to Abraham Israel. Only after a certain time had passed did the Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam agree to accept him in their community, and he never reached the status of "*yahid*" (member)<sup>38</sup>.

In 1696 the Portuguese Jewish community acted similarly in the case of

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> See J. Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance: Jewish-Gentile Relations in Medieval and Modern Times* (New York, 1961), pp. 77-81.

<sup>36</sup> Y. Kaplan, "Jewish Proselytes in the Portuguese Community of Amsterdam in the 17th Century. The Case of Lorenzo Escudero", *Proceedings of the Seventh World Congress of Jewish Studies. History of the Jews in Europe* (Jerusalem, 1981), pp. 87-102 (in Hebrew).

<sup>37</sup> Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid, Inquisición, Libro 1.123 (no page numbers); cf. I.S. Révah, *Spinoza et le Dr. Juan de Prado* (Paris et La Haye, 1959), p. 66.

<sup>38</sup> Y. Kaplan, "Jewish Proselytes", *op. cit.*, p. 95.

Pablo Montañés, a former Augustinian monk from the Canary Islands who also wished to convert<sup>39</sup>. Apparently fear of the infiltration of hostile and provocative elements played no small role here. The Jews had certainly not forgotten the case of Daniel de Ribera, a friend of Juan de Prado and Benedict Spinoza, who was of undiluted Christian origins and also a former monk, apparently from Catalonia. His name had been José Carerras y Coligo. He first went from Spain to Italy and from there to Brazil, and, sometime between 1653 and 1655, after a stay in Portugal, he reached Amsterdam, where he joined the Jewish community. The *maamad* investigated him thoroughly after learning that the man denied the main tenets of the Torah and was spreading his heretical views among the young people whom he taught Latin. After the excommunication of Spinoza and Prado we find no mention of him until his reappearance in England. There he once again converted, to Anglicanism, and in 1694 he left Britain with his two daughters and returned to the Roman Catholic religion<sup>40</sup>.

Despite the community's reluctance, it is clear that conversion was not quite so uncommon among the Spanish and Portuguese Jews in western Europe during the seventeenth century, especially in Holland. Paragraph 25 of the *Remonstrantie* written by Grotius in 1615, the legal basis for the presence of the Jewish community in Holland, makes the conversion of Christians by Jews punishable by expulsion and confiscation of property<sup>41</sup>. Nevertheless the documents of the Talmud Torah community of Amsterdam show that dozens of converts joined the Jewish people there. Perhaps the religious pluralism and the relatively liberal atmosphere of Holland created fertile ground for that phenomenon. Moreover, in that most of the converts in Holland were of Spanish or Portuguese Catholic origin, their conversion did not offend the sensibilities of the Calvinist authorities, who saw Catholicism as a far more dangerous enemy than Judaism. Thus the Jewish community had no reason to fear the conversion of Catholics, particularly in that it was difficult for the Dutch authorities to distinguish among the Spanish and Portuguese immigrants between apostates of Jewish origin who were returning to Judaism and those of purely Catholic extraction. Since converts to Judaism of both kinds underwent similar religious ceremonies, the outside observer would find it difficult to discern the difference between them.

<sup>39</sup> H. Beinart, "The Trial of Pablo Montañés, a Canariote Augustinian Friar", *Helmantica*, XXVIII, nos. 85-87 (1977), pp. 23-32.

<sup>40</sup> Y. Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism*, pp. 123-127.

<sup>41</sup> Hugo de Groot, *Remonstrantie nopen de ordre dije in de Landen van Hollandt ende West wrieslandt dijent gestelt op de joden*, ed. J. Meijer (Amsterdam, 1949), pp. 118-119; J. Meijer, "Hugo Grotius' *Remonstrantie*", *Jewish Social Studies*, XVII (1955), p. 101. It must be assumed that Grotius referred to Christians in general here, without differentiating among churches and sects, but in reality that generalization was not applied to Roman Catholics at all.

However, even converts of Calvinist origins were not lacking in Holland at that time. The most famous of them was Jan Richen of Hoorn, who converted as an old man and took the Jewish name of Jeonatan Ger. In 1600 he wrote a polemical anti-Christian book in Dutch, called *Keset Jeonatan*, which Samuel Abas translated into Portuguese in 1675<sup>42</sup>. At the end of the seventeenth century there was the famous case of a young Dutch woman who was about to convert. Philip van Limborch, who wrote about the incident at length in a letter to his friend John Locke on December 12, 1694, dissuaded her with great effort<sup>43</sup>. In 1697 Pieter Spaeth, a Lutheran pietist of Catholic extraction, who had converted to Catholicism, converted to Judaism in Amsterdam<sup>44</sup>.

Despite the foregoing, there was evident reluctance, as noted above, among the Spanish Jews to become involved in acts of conversion, especially conversion without a thorough prior investigation. That reluctance was essentially, in my opinion, of an ideological nature: in that the Jewish people was essentially different from the gentiles, the act of conversion could not change the essence of the convert. That view, which was taken by certain medieval rabbis<sup>45</sup>, was clearly expressed in the thought of Isaac Orobio:

“For the covenant between the Lord and the seed of Abraham and the children of Israel will remain forever, and *gentiles* who acknowledge the Lord of truth and worship Him *will be Jewish converts*, beloved of their lord, but *they will never be Jews nor of the seed of Abraham*, for Israel is not a spiritual entity but rather a nation, whether good or bad”<sup>46</sup>.

In other words, Orobio distinguishes clearly between Israel, the seed of Abraham, that is “Judíos Viejos” (Old Jews) and “Judíos Nuevos” (New Jews) who accepted the Jewish religion but do not belong to the body of the Jewish nation. The particular essence of the Jews and their exalted lineage are emphasized elsewhere by Orobio, in a blunt and unequivocal manner somewhat partaking of the tone then current in Iberia:

“Neither in olden times nor today were those who took upon themselves the observance of the laws of Moses called Jews, but ‘gerim’ [sojourners], which is what they are termed by Holy Writ, and it is a religious duty to treat them

<sup>42</sup> See Ms. 48 B 11, from the Ets Haim collection, a copy dating from 1743.

<sup>43</sup> The letter in Dutch translation was published by Ph. van Limborch, *Vriendelijke Onderhandelinge med een Geleerden Jood over de Waarheid van den Christelyken Godsdienst* (Amsterdam, 1723), pp. 723 ff. That is a Dutch edition of the controversy between Limborch and Isaac Orobio. On the young woman who was about to convert to Judaism see also J. van den Berg, *Joden en Christenen in Nederland gedurende de zeventiende eeuw* (Kampen, 1969), p. 42.

<sup>44</sup> Van den Berg, *loc. cit.*; cf. H.J. Schoeps, *Philosemitismus im Barock* (Tübingen, 1952), pp. 67-80.

<sup>45</sup> J. Katz, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-142.

<sup>46</sup> *Respuesta a un Cavallero Francés*, Ms. Ets Haim 48 D 6, fol. 307r.

as brothers, but *without granting them the honorable name* [honroso nombre] *of the house of Israel* until, in the course of generations, they assimilate and blend into the rest of the Jewish people”<sup>47</sup>.

Orobio’s use of the word “honroso” was not coincidental here. That term is taken from the conceptual world of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain. There is some historical irony in the fact that refugees from the Inquisition, the victims of the purity-of-blood regulations on the Iberian Peninsula, adopted an outlook common in their country of origin, internalizing the concepts of honor and lineage.

Regarding those Christians of purely Christian extraction, who, despite the aforementioned ideological reservations and social suspicions, nevertheless converted to Judaism and were accepted in the Portuguese Jewish community of Amsterdam, one might well ask whether they encountered discrimination on the part of the leaders and pillars of the community. Did the attitude towards them deviate from Jewish law regarding converts?

There is more than one sign that those who were not granted “the honorable name”, in Orobio’s words, encountered a reserved and discriminatory attitude on the part of the members of the Portuguese Jewish community and its leaders. That is expressed in a number of areas:

1. In the list of poor people whom the congregation encouraged to emigrate eastward to Italy or Poland, so as to get rid of them, as was done with undesirables, the presence of names indicating converts is conspicuous, completely disproportionate to their number in the community. Thus, for example, in 1622, Abraham Gher and Abraham Israel Corea received “travel grants”. Of the former it is stated explicitly, “*por ser pessoa que conven a nação irse desta cidade (sic)*” (because he was a person who should leave this city for the benefit of the nation); and in 1623 Jessurun Israel and Abraham Jessurun Israel and other converts also appear<sup>48</sup>.

2. Certain converts performed menial tasks for the congregation, some of which befit a “sabbath goy” rather than a Jew, such as cleaning the synagogue, removing the snow from the entrance on holidays, and the like<sup>49</sup>.

3. The most conspicuous disability was that they were almost never appointed to official posts in the community. Jewish law stipulates that a convert cannot be given a post with coercive authority. The Rabbis based that restriction on the verse, “Thou shalt surely place a king over thee from among thy brethren” (see *Yebamot* 45b; *Kiddushin* 76b), and Maimonides writes, “Not only the monarchy, but any office with coercive authority

<sup>47</sup> *Prevenções Divinas*, Ms. Ets Haim, 48 D 6, fol. 141r.

<sup>48</sup> GAA, PA 334, no. 13, fols. 6r; 13r.

<sup>49</sup> *Idem*, no. 10 (*Libro dos Termos deste Kahal kados de Bet Israel* etc.), fol. 79.



among the Jews'' (*Hilkhot Melakhim*, I, 4)<sup>50</sup>. The common approach in medieval Jewish communities was that the convert could only be appointed to posts which have no coercive authority. Thus, for example, when the physician Samuel de Mercado of Amsterdam asked Rabbi Jacob Sasportas whether ''a convert whose mother is not Jewish may have a position of authority in the community'', the Sephardic rabbi of North Africa answered that there was no impediment to his being appointed treasurer, for example, ''for there is no coercive authority in that post, only fidelity''<sup>51</sup>. But the lay leaders and rabbis of Amsterdam did not hold with that view, and in most cases they did not allow converts to hold community office or exercise public functions. On 22 Heshvan, 5412 (1651) the lay leadership decided, with the support of the two rabbis, Menasseh ben Israel and David Pardo, to grant the petition of the convert Moseh Roiz da Costa and declare that he was fit ''to be appointed to any post which the holy congregation and the *maamad* might give him, without any exception'' (''achão pode ser admetido para servir todos os cargos que o KK e maamad pode dar sem esebção''). However, the end of that decision makes it clear that his was an unusual case, the exception that proves the rule, for it states that other converts are not included in this decision<sup>52</sup>. Thus for converts in general there was no possibility of assuming communal posts, not even those which had no coercive authority.

Among the converts who joined the Portuguese Jewish community of Amsterdam there were also Negroes, the group most discriminated against of all. Here the leaders of the *Nação* deviated from Jewish law and threw off all restraint, contrary to the practice in other Jewish communities, especially in Moslem countries, which happened to come in contact with and absorb dark-skinned Jews. Thus, for example, on 20 Sivan, 5404 (1644) the men of the *maamad* decreed that ''circumcised Negro Jews'' were not to be called to the Torah or given any honorary commandment to perform in the synagogue, ''porque assy conven a reputação do Kaal y ão bom governo'' (''for such is fitting for the reputation of the congregation and its good government'')<sup>53</sup>. On 24 Nissan, 5407 (1647) it was decided to mark off a separate section of the cemetery in Ouderkerk for the burial of ''all the Jewish Negroes and mulattoes'', so as to keep them at a distance

<sup>50</sup> See the Talmudic sources on that issue, *Talmudic Encyclopedia*, vol. VI, cols. 266-267 (Hebrew).

<sup>51</sup> R. Jacob Sasportas, *Sepher Ohel Ja'acov* (Amsterdam, 5497 [1737]), no. IV, fol. 3r ff. (Hebrew).

<sup>52</sup> GAA, PA 334, no. 19, fol. 315: ''Termo en que se declara ser abto Mose Roiz da Costa para servir todos os cargos no KK''.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 173: ''Os SSres do Mahamad por justas conssiderazois hordenan que avendo algun judeo negro çercunçidado não seja chamado a zefre nen se lhe dara nenuma misua das que se tirão das sortes do Kaal ...''.

from the other members of the community even in death, except for those Negroes and mulattoes "who had married whites" or those who were born of a marriage performed under a bridal canopy with a religious ceremony<sup>54</sup>. It should thus be emphasized that the community did not forbid mixed marriages with Negro or mulatto converts, and that the lot of Negroes who married white people was better than that of other Negroes. However, it appears that as a matter of principle the members of the *maamad* did all they could to prevent the conversion of Negroes and mulattoes, as stated explicitly in the bylaw of 24 Shevat, 5410 (1650)<sup>55</sup>.

The presence of Negroes and mulattoes within the community was not the only threat to their reputation perceived by the Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam. Menasseh ben Israel was incensed by the notion that the American Indians might be the ten lost tribes:

"Because the Jews (as was admirably proven by the physician Juan Huarte, in his book *Examen de ingenios*, (chapter 14), were the most attractive people, the handsomest, and those with the best intelligence in the world; and how could the Indians be like that, in that they lack all those things: they are ugly in their bodies and rude in their intelligence"<sup>56</sup>.

It is noteworthy that Huarte de San Juan, in chapter 12 of his famous work, did praise the intelligence and acumen of the Jews ("ingenio muy agudo", and, elsewhere, "agudos y de grande ingenio"); however, he never said a word about their comeliness, nor did he claim they had the best minds in the world<sup>57</sup>.

In contrast, in chapter 14 of that work, cited by Menasseh ben Israel, the witty Spanish physician said that the Greeks were "*los mas hermosos hombres del mundo y de mas alto ingenio*" ("the handsomest men in the world and with the highest intelligence")<sup>58</sup>. Thus we see that in the competition for divine election it is permissible to bend the truth somewhat, even in the view of Menasseh ben Israel.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 224: "Termo sobre que aija lugar separado em Bet Aghaim (*sic*) para enteraren negros e mulatos judeos. Em 24 de Nissan se adjuntarão os SSres do Mahamad e rezoluerão que de oije em diante se fiziesse no Bet Aghajim de Ouderkercke hum lugar separado para se enterrarem todos os negros e mulatos judeos, eçito os que nasserem em judesmo havidos com quedosim, ou os que forem cazados com brancos com quedosim, que estes tais se enterrarão na carreira ordinaria . . .".

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 281.

<sup>56</sup> Menasseh ben Israel, *Esperança de Israel* (Amsterdam, 5410 [1650]), p. 118: "por que los judíos (como admirablemente prueba el doctor Iohan Huarte, en el libro *Examen de Ingeneos* [*sic*], capítulo 14) fueron la gente más dispuesta, de buen rostro y lindo entendimiento del mundo: como pues estos pueden ser los Indios, que carecen de todo esto: feos de cuerpo y de rudo entendimiento?"

<sup>57</sup> J. Huarte de San Juan, *Examen de Ingenios para las Ciencias* (Baeza, 1575). I quote from the critical edition of E. Torre (Madrid, 1976), pp. 237 ff., also see pp. 241, 245.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 290.

From the foregoing it appears that the Iberian concept of *pureza* underwent a transformation among the Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam, in that the racist sting was almost completely removed from it. Nevertheless it helped them consolidate their self-identity and mark out their boundaries as a group. It also fostered their collective pride, which had been injured by the discrimination they had suffered for generations because of their Jewish origins.

However, the concept of “noblenes and purity of blood” was not only used by the Sephardic Jews of Amsterdam to show their superiority to those of non-Jewish origins. It also assisted them in establishing their place and “conserving” themselves as a separate and unique group in contrast to other groups of Jews such as the Ashkenazis or Italians, for example, and many of the regulations of the community and its institutions show reservations regarding other groups of Jews. For example, on 9 Shevat, 5418 (1658), the *maamad* decided not to allow Ashkenazic, Italian, or mulatto children to study in the “*midrashim*” (classes) of the Portuguese Jewish community’s religious school, “in consideration of the great damage done to the good education of the sons of the Portuguese nation”<sup>59</sup>.

Discrimination against Jews who were not of Iberian extraction emerges more sharply when one notes that they regarded *conversos*, even “New Christians”, whose Jewish identity had been weakened and blurred, as an integral part of their socio-national group, the *nação*. An example of that attitude is found in the regulations of the *Santa Companhia de Dotar Orfãos e Donzelas Pobres* (The Holy Society for Providing Dowries to Orphaned and Destitute Brides) of 1615, in which it was explicitly stated that that society would provide assistance to poor girls “members of the Portuguese or Spanish nation, Hebrew girls, living from St. Jean de Luz to Danzig, . . . in France, Flanders, England, and Germany”<sup>60</sup>. Thus that society set itself the goal not only of helping “daughters of the nation” who lived in “*terras de judesmo*” (Jewish countries) but also those who lived disguised as Christians in places such as France, Flanders, and England, where Judaism was forbidden. Both categories of girls were seen as “daughters of the nation”, and even the daughters of *conversos* were called “Hebrew”. Although a necessary condition for receiving aid was that the girls marry circumcised Jews under a bridal canopy with a Jewish ceremony, that does not change the fact that the regulations related to girls from the entire community of *conversos* as “daughters of the nation”, belonging to families

<sup>59</sup> GAA, PA 334, no. 190, fol. 426: “Termo da resolução que tomarão os Sres do Mahamad s[ob]re que não posão admetir os Rubisim nos Midrasim de talmud Tora mosos tudescos, ytalianos e mulatos para meldar”.

<sup>60</sup> See the first page of the printed regulations of that society, Amsterdam, 1615, photocopy in GAA, PA 334, no. 1322.

assumed to be proper and whom it was permitted to marry even before they openly returned to the Jewish religion. Moreover, they were absolutely preferable to brides from Ashkenazic background. That egalitarian attitude towards *conversos* who had not openly returned to Judaism is expressed clearly in section eight of the regulations of the Dotar Society in defining the conditions for membership:

“Eligible for membership are all those who are absent [*i.e.*, not living in Amsterdam], as agreed upon in these regulations, as long as there is reliable evidence that they believe in the unity of the Lord of the Universe and recognize the truth of His holy Torah, whether circumcised or not, whether they live within Judaism or outside it”<sup>61</sup>.

Thus we see that the congregation maintained a society which was open to Jews and *conversos*, with clear and explicit recognition that both were members of a single socio-national group. In the aforementioned society *conversos* living in the “lands of idolatry” were permitted to be members in good standing without actually having to keep the commandments, for only faith in the Jewish religion and spiritual identification with its creed were required. That fact is particularly significant in that the society in question had the function of regulating the institution of the family, fostering the most basic and intimate personal ties, which were naturally particularly sensitive to external social factors. From the social and national point of view not only were the *conversos*, in contrast with the Ashkenazis, the Italians, the mulattoes, and the rest, not considered alien, but their membership in the “nation” was not in the least questionable. Although *religious legitimacy* was never given to those among them who preferred to remain in the “lands of idolatry” rather than emigrated to free countries, the regulations of the Dotar Society express the *social legitimacy* accorded to them by their brethren who had openly returned to Judaism.

That situation frequently embarrassed the group’s leadership and rabbinates, who ran up against the deep contradictions created by the failure of religious identity to overlap completely with national and social solidarity, a failure expressed, among other things, in the various meanings taken by the term “*nação*” or “*nación*” in the sources and documents of the Portuguese community of Amsterdam. The concept “*membros da nação*” (members of the nation) or “members of the Spanish-Portuguese nation” sometimes referred to members of Portuguese Jewish community in Amsterdam, and sometimes to the Sephardic diaspora in general. And occasionally it even referred to New Christians of Jewish extraction living in the “lands of idolatry”, whether or not they identified with Judaism<sup>62</sup>.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, cap. 8.

<sup>62</sup> Kaplan, *op. cit.*, *supra* n. 18, pp. 166-167.

In my opinion that last phenomenon is an original response to the Iberian “purity of blood” regulations: just as they did not distinguish between sincere New Christians and those who were secret Jews, all of whom were subject to racial discrimination, similarly, in the consciousness of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews, belonging to the “*nação*” was not dependent upon open religious identification nor even upon spiritual religious affinities. Here we have a social and historical situation such as had never previously existed in a Jewish community. Although the Spanish and Portuguese Jews in western Europe did not officially depart from Jewish law, their collective consciousness included a group of people within the confines of their identity who, from a halakhic point of view, could not be viewed as Jews. At the same time they rejected Jews of other ethnic background from their collective self-definition. In so doing, the internalization of the Iberian concepts of *exclusion* played a decisive role.

## THE RISE AND FALL OF THE JEWISH INDIAN THEORY

RICHARD H. POPKIN

No conference dealing with Menasseh ben Israel would be complete without a discussion of the Jewish Indian theory, which was dealt with in Menasseh's most famous work, *The Hope of Israel*. Though Menasseh was far from an advocate of the view, his discussion became crucial at the time, and was revived and revived until well into the nineteenth century. The history of the theory provides an insight into the changing ways Europeans and European Americans saw their place in the world, and the changing ways they perceived the world.

This paper will deal with the crisis about interpreting the American Indians around 1650, with Menasseh's resolution of this crisis, with the impact his resolution had on millenarian thinking and politics in the second half of the seventeenth century, with the revival of Menasseh's theory in colonial America, with the struggle over the Jewish Indian theory in early United States history until it was rejected by President Jefferson, with the lingering aspects of the view in other nineteenth-century theories, and, finally, with its demise with the rise of racist anthropology and American nationalism.

Whenever I tell students in America that there was a serious theory years ago that the Indians were Jews, and that some of the Lost Tribes were located in America, they look blankly at me as if it's my nonsense, or they laugh embarrassedly to be in a room where such things are said. However, I quickly try to calm their fears by pointing out that after Columbus met the Indians in 1492, there was a problem of accounting for who they were and where they came from. If everyone on the surface of the earth was a descendant of Adam and Eve and the seven survivors of the Flood, then the Indians had to be connected to the Biblical world. Columbus himself had no problem. He thought they were Asians, since he was sure that he had reached Cathay. Amerigo Vespucci was a bit more baffled. He knew that the Indians were not Stoics or Epicureans, but was not sure who they might be. The Pope declared the Indians to be fully human<sup>1</sup>. Various ex-

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<sup>1</sup> The Papal Bull is dated June 9, 1537. On it see Lewis Hanke, *The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America* (Philadelphia, 1949); and R.H. Popkin, "The Pre-Adamite

plorers and missionaries offered theories tracing the Indians back to migrations from the Middle-East – from Phoenicia, Arabia, or maybe from Solomon's Ophir. To deny a Biblical origin for the Indians was to see them, and their history, as outside of Scripture, and Scripture as incomplete and inadequate<sup>2</sup>. Only a few hardy souls in the sixteenth century dared suggest this – Paracelsus, Giordano Bruno, Christopher Marlowe, and maybe sir Walter Raleigh. Bruno had read about the Aztec calendar stone (which, once discovered and deciphered, was promptly buried for more than two centuries). It led him to embellish Paracelsus' theory that there were multiple origins of mankind. Marlowe had heard of the findings of Raleigh's trip to Virginia, and had probably met Bruno. Marlowe is supposed to have given a lecture in which he claimed that Indian history was 16,000 years old, hence much older than the world according to the Jewish calendar, or according to the revised dating system of Archbishop Ussher<sup>3</sup>.

In the early seventeenth century various Spanish explorers and theologians debated the origins of the Indians, always indicating that the solution had to involve tracing them back to their Biblical roots. More and more refined theories developed, some just simple migration views to the effect that the Indians, like the Europeans, Asiatics and Africans, all got to where they are now living by migration after Noah's Flood and the dispersion after the Tower of Babel episode. Detailed histories of European, Asian and African travels already existed, and ones suitable to account for the Indians were added. Most of these were not intended to glorify or extol the virtues of the Indians, who were being horribly exploited by the Conquistadores<sup>4</sup>. Only the theory of Bartolomé de las Casas, the defender of the Indians, involved first making them co-equal descendants of Adam and Eve, better people than the Europeans because they had not been corrupted, and some even the very best people, the Elect described by St. Paul who are to be preserved until the end of time to rejoin Jesus in his Kingdom on Earth. Las Casas and his followers, who tried to create a millennial state without Spanish Conquistadores in Guatemala, introduced a supernatural element into theories about the Indians, namely that some of them

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Theory in the Renaissance'', in Edward P. Mahoney, ed., *Philosophy and Humanism. Renaissance Essays in Honor of Paul Oskar Kristeller* (Leiden, 1976), esp. pp. 57 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Popkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 57 and 63-64; Lynn Glaser, *Indians or Jews?* (Gilroy, CA, 1973), chap. 2. Two Spanish writers at the beginning of the seventeenth century, Joseph de Acosta and Gregorio García, insisted that one had to accept that the Indians were somehow descended from Adam and Eve, in order not to contradict Scripture. Citations are given in Popkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-64.

<sup>3</sup> See Popkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-62.

<sup>4</sup> See Lynn Glaser, *Indians or Jews?*, chap. 2, and the authors quoted there.

had special properties that were crucial in Providential times to come<sup>5</sup>. This view may have interacted with a Marrano millenarianism that developed in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in New Spain to the effect that God would save the faithful, the hidden Jews in America<sup>6</sup>.

At the same time, from around 1640-1650, a difficulty emerged in accounting for the Indians and in relating them to religious developments in European history. On the one hand, the French Marrano millenarian, Isaac La Peyrère, offered his theory that the Indians, like the South Sea Islanders, the Chinese and lots of other groups, were not descendants of Adam. La Peyrère wrote his statement of this around 1642, but only published it in 1655. He, the secretary of the Prince of Condé, showed his theory to people in various parts of Europe, and gathered new evidence for it from his discussions with scholars. His case, briefly, was that mankind existed for an indefinitely long period of time. Because the human race was such a mess, a war of all against all, God created Adam, the first Jew, as a means of saving everyone. The Adamites were called, then were rejected when Jesus came, and were now about to be recalled. Their recall, with the arrival of the Jewish Messiah, would lead to the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the messianic world in which everyone – pre-Adamites, Adamites and post-Adamites – would flourish in peace and happiness. But only Jews were Adamites. La Peyrère insisted that his theory would better explain what we know of ancient pagan history, of other cultures found through the voyages of discovery, and also the anomalies in the text of the Bible<sup>7</sup>.

La Peyrère's theory was answered long before it was published, by the great Dutch scholar, Hugo Grotius, who saw the work in manuscript. In 1643 he wrote a pamphlet on the origins of the American people, and claimed they were descendants of the Viking explorations<sup>8</sup>. (La Peyrère became Europe's leading expert on the Eskimos in order to answer Grotius, and pointed out that if Grotius could solve the Indian problem by appeal to the Vikings, then what about the Eskimos, who were in Greenland when the Vikings got there?)<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Bartolomé de las Casas, *A Selection of his Writings*, trans. and ed. by George Sanderlin (New York, 1972), Part IV.

<sup>6</sup> Luis de Carvajal, *The Enlightened: The Writings of Luis de Carvajal, el Mozo*, trans. and ed. by Seymour H. Liebman (Coral Gables, Florida, 1967); and Martin A. Cohen, *The Martyr. The Story of a Secret Jew and the Mexican Inquisition in the Sixteenth Century* (Philadelphia, 1973).

<sup>7</sup> On La Peyrère, see Popkin, 'The Marrano Theology of Isaac La Peyrère', *Studi internazionali di filosofia*, V (1973), pp. 97-126; and my book on *Isaac La Peyrère (1596-1676), His Life, His Work and Influence* (Leiden, 1987).

<sup>8</sup> Hugo Grotius, *Dissertatio altera de Origine Gentium Americanarum adversus obtractorem* (n.p., 1643).

<sup>9</sup> Isaac La Peyrère, *Relation de Groenland* (Paris, 1647) and *Relation de l'Islande* (Paris, 1663).



Grotius' solution was just a new version of connecting the Indians to the European-Biblical world. La Peyrère sought to sunder the worlds entirely and restrict divine history to Jewish history. This might easily account for the many kinds of peoples in the world, but it also required a radical re-reading and re-writing of the accepted Scriptural picture. All this La Peyrère's many critics, including Menasseh, were not ready to do.

As the English began colonizing New England, the Scots Nova Scotia, the Swedes, New Sweden (Delaware), these Protestant missionaries and settlers sought to understand who they were dealing with, and where these people came from. Two of the leading English millenarians of the seventeenth century, the very pious and highly learned Joseph Mede of Cambridge, who had deciphered the chronologies of Daniel and Revelation, and his student, the Cambridge Platonist Henry More, offered a most negative theological interpretation of the American Indians. As Europe was, according to them, reaching its millenarian climax, that would occur between 1650-1680, with the conversion of the Jews, God was revealing aspects of the world hitherto unknown, through allowing for the increase of human knowledge, partly through the extension of navigation and commerce. The Indians, so discovered, were the children of Satan, who had been driven out of the Old World when Jesus arrived, and now were to be destroyed by his Second Coming. The Indians were purely malevolent beings whose total defeat was to be their only contribution to the course of divine history. Henry More delighted in retelling the goriest Spanish tales about the Indians to show how demonic they were<sup>10</sup>.

Although Mede carried great weight with the English Puritans, they realized that even he could be wrong. He claimed that various events in the Book of Revelation would occur in 1642, and they did not. Besides, the settler-missionaries found matters in Massachusetts Bay Colony quite different than Mede had described. They found docile, friendly Indians, some of whom wanted to become Christians. They established schools for them, and they tried to get the great Jan Comenius to use Harvard as the center of universal enlightenment for Indians and Europeans<sup>11</sup>. They translated the Scriptures for the Indians. The missionaries began to

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<sup>10</sup> Mede's view on the Satanic origin of the American Indians appears in his letter to the Rev. William Twisse, March 23, 1634/5, in *The Works of the Pious and Profoundly Learned Joseph Mede, B.D.* (London, 1664), pp. 980-981. Mede said, "So the Devil, when he saw the world apostazing from him, laid the foundations of a new Kingdom, by deducting this Colony from the North into *America*, where they have increased into an innumerable multitude".

Henry More, in *An Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness* (London, 1660), Book III, chaps. III, XIII and XIV, dealt with the horrendous practices of the demonic savages.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. G.H. Turnbull, *Hartlib, Dury and Comenius* (London, 1947), pp. 59-70; and Popkin, "The Third Force in 17th Century Philosophy: Scepticism, Science and Biblical Prophecy", *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres* (1983-1), p. 52.

suspect something radically different was going on in the environs of Boston, namely that pure English Christians were baptizing and converting Indians who were Jews. And, if the Indians were Jews, an enormous missionary effort would be needed. So, on behalf of the New England missionary society, a volume was written by a Norfolk preacher, one Thomas Thorowgood, called *Jewes in America, or the Probability that the Indians are Jews*<sup>12</sup>. This was to be dedicated to Charles I, but his overthrow delayed the publication of the book. The job of writing a preface to it was given to John Dury, perhaps the most active millenarian theoretician in the Puritan Revolution. Dury, 1596-1680, a Scot, was born in Holland, student at the Walloon Seminary in Leiden, was a pastor in Germany. He then began a life-long campaign to reunite all of the evangelical churches in Europe, and travelled all over, from Sweden to Poland, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, France and England. He lived for a while in Amsterdam, and was one of Cromwell's chief agents on the Continent<sup>13</sup>.

He was in England when presented with Thorowgood's text. He immediately put it in the context of some Providential data he had learned from Jews in Holland, especially from Menasseh ben Israel. The Lost Tribes of Israel would reappear just before the millennium (which Dury was sure would occur in 1655)<sup>14</sup>. He had heard from a Jewish jeweler in The Hague that some of the Lost Tribes had been located east of the Holy Land, in Persia or in Afghanistan<sup>15</sup>. He had heard from the most learned Jewish writer of the time, his friend and co-worker Menasseh ben Israel, that a Portuguese Marrano explorer, Antonio de Montezinos, had encountered a Jewish tribe in the Andes Mountains. He knew that Menasseh had had Montezinos, who came to Amsterdam in 1644, give his account before a notary. So Dury (who was at the time planning to set up a college of Jewish studies in London, with Menasseh as one of its three professors)<sup>16</sup> wrote Menasseh for a copy of the Montezinos report. He was duly sent it<sup>17</sup>. Then Dury and his fellow millenarian Nathaniel Homes wrote Menasseh to see if he made out of this what they did, namely that the Indians were the Lost

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Thorowgood, *Jewes in America or Probabilities that the Americans are of that Race* . . . (London, 1650).

<sup>13</sup> On Dury see J. Minton Batten, *John Dury: Advocate of Christian Reunion* (Chicago, 1944); Charles Webster, *The Great Instauration* (London, 1975).

<sup>14</sup> So Dury indicated in his preface to Abraham Von Frankenburg's *Clavis Apocalyptica*, published in London in 1651 by Samuel Hartlib.

<sup>15</sup> John Dury, *An Epistolicall Discourse of Mr. John Dury to Mr. Thorowgood, Concerning his Conjecture that the Americans are descended from the Israelites*, Jan. 27, 1649, prefaced to Thorowgood, *Jewes in America, Or, Probabilities that the Americans are of that Race* (London, 1650).

<sup>16</sup> R.H. Popkin, "The First College for Jewish Studies", *Revue des Etudes Juives*, CXLIII (1984), pp. 351-364.

<sup>17</sup> The notorized copy was published by Dury as an appendix to Thorowgood, *Jewes in America*. It also appears in the forematter of Menasseh's *Hope of Israel*.

Tribes. The correspondence, printed in the preface to Thorowgood's book, shows Menasseh being most cautious, unconvinced; until he was finally willing to say that the group encountered by Montezinos could be part of a Lost Tribe, while the rest of the inhabitants of the Americas were migrants from Asia. Homes immediately pointed out that this meant that the climax of world history was at hand, because the Lost Tribes were beginning to reappear. Menasseh was asked what was the Jewish view about the Lost Tribes and their reappearance<sup>18</sup>. Rather than write another letter, Menasseh wrote his most famous work, *The Hope of Israel*, which appeared in 1650 in Spanish, Latin, Hebrew and English, and in Dutch a few years later. The English edition, dedicated to the revolutionary Parliament of England, was translated by a friend of John Milton's, the wild-eyed millenarian Moses Wall. This translation appeared in editions in 1650, 1651 and 1652. The last two editions included an appendix in which Wall exchanged views with a reader, and emphasized the millenarian importance of his work, *and* that it should help bring about the conversion of the Jews<sup>19</sup>.

Even prior to Wall's translation, and Menasseh's own publication in Spanish, Hebrew and Latin, his text of the Montezinos report, and his views were having reverberations on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. One Edward Winslow, in 1649, published a work entitled *The Glorious Progress of the Gospel among the Indians in New England. Manifested by three Letters under the Hand of the famous Instrument of the Lord, John Eliot*. The work was dedicated to Parliament and the Council of State. In the preface, Winslow said that there are two great questions which have troubled ancient and modern writers, and men of the greatest depth and ability. They have tried to resolve (1), what became of the Ten Tribes of Israel? and (2), Where did the American Indians come from? "A godly Minister of this city (no doubt, John Dury) wrote to Rabbi ben-Israel, a great Dr. of the Jewes, now living at Amsterdam" to find out if he knew what became of the Ten Tribes. According to Winslow, Menasseh's answer was that they were certainly transported to America. For Winslow it was wondrous that God had opened the hearts of the Indians to the Gospel just when so many eminent divines expect the conversion of the Jews<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> Dury, "An Epistolicall Discourse", preface to Thorowgood, at the end.

<sup>19</sup> See David S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England 1603-1655* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 186-189. Glaser has published a photoreproduction of the 1652 edition appended to *Indians or Jews*. Henry Méchoulan is publishing a critical edition of the English text to which I have added a note on Moses Wall. Ernestine van der Wall has found that Dury decided on whom to dedicate the work to. Cf. her "Three Letters by Menasseh ben Israel to John Dury", *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis*, LXV (1985), pp. 46-62. See especially pp. 57 and 61.

<sup>20</sup> Edward Winslow, *The Glorious Progress of the Gospel among the Indians in New England. Mani-*

Dury wrote an appendix to the work in which he stressed that the Gospel being revealed to the Indians led many judicious and godly theologians to believe that the conversion of the Jews is at hand. In fact Dury reported that "It is the expectation of some of the wisest Jews now living, that about the year 1650, *Either we Christians shall be Mosaick, or else that they themselves Jewes shall be Christians*". No indication was given of who these wisest Jews were<sup>21</sup>. We know Dury was a close friend of Menasseh's, and he probably knew Rabbi Judah Leon Templo. Dury added "that those sometimes poor, now precious Indians . . . may be as the first fruits of the glorious harvest of *Israel's Redemption*"<sup>22</sup>. Thus Dury connected the missionary activities of the Rev. John Eliot in Massachusetts with the imminently expected conversion of the Jews. Both the English translator, Moses Wall, and the anonymous author of the letter *To the Learned Jew: Menasseh ben Israel of Amsterdam and to all of his Brethren there and elsewhere, Grace, Mercy and Truth from the Most high God be granted and given*, saw the news in the Montezinos report as evidence that the Jews should convert right away. In the anonymous letter Menasseh was urged over and over again to convert, and to convince his brethren to do so, because of the discovery that the Indians were Jews, the Lost Tribes<sup>23</sup>.

Our colleagues here, Henry Méchoulan and Gérard Nahon, have shown in their preface to the recent French translation of Menasseh's work, that Menasseh did not become a believer in the Jewish Indian theory, but held to the view that just part of a Lost Tribe had been discovered<sup>24</sup>.

Menasseh, after printing Montezinos' statement, carefully delineated the problem – there are so many opinions about the origins of the Indians, that it is very hard to tell which is true. There is no Scriptural statement on the matter. Menasseh said that he had only written about solid and infallible things ("as those things are which concern our Law")<sup>25</sup>. But his friends asked for his view about where the Lost Tribes were. One has to have faith, Menasseh claimed, that all people are descended from Adam and Eve, and the survivors of the Flood. So, the Indians must be part of the

*fested by Three Letters under the Hand of the Famous Instrument of the Lord, John Eliot* (London, 1649), p. 73.

<sup>21</sup> John Dury, "An Appendix", in Edward Winslow, *The Glorious Progress*, p. 93.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>23</sup> The anonymous author is Sir Edmund Spencer who wrote both *A Briefe Epistle to the Learned Menasseh ben Israel* (London, 1650) and a letter "To the Translator of Menasseh ben Israels Spes Israelis", published in the 1651 and 1652 editions of *The Hope of Israel* after Moses Wall's "Considerations upon the Point of the Conversion of the Jewes". On Spencer, see Katz, *op. cit.*, pp. 148, 184 and 210.

<sup>24</sup> Henri Méchoulan and Gérard Nahon, "Introduction", to Menasseh ben Israel, *Esperance d'Israël* (Paris, 1979).

<sup>25</sup> Menasseh ben Israel, *The Hope of Israel* (London, 1650), p. 17.

human dispersion after the Flood and the Tower of Babel. Second, the Ten Tribes, as described in 2nd Esdras were scattered, not all at once, nor to one place. Then it is reasonable to expect some possibility of dispersion throughout the world – the Chinese Jews, the Jews of South India, of Ethiopia, all seem to be remnants of the Lost Tribes. So, the people encountered by Montezinos are probably also a part of a Lost Tribe that was driven from Tartary across some land bridge in the Pacific to America. The re-emergence of the Lost Tribes fits with other evidence that the fulfillment of God's Promise is at hand, the Redemption of Israel. The Ten Tribes will emerge and return to join the other two in Israel in the near future<sup>26</sup>.

Menasseh said he saw no reason to doubt Montezinos' story, but as it was a human account, it could not be proven. However, it fitted with a lot of other data, and helped explain the peopling of America, with part of a Lost Tribe, plus other branches of humanity descended from our Biblical parents<sup>27</sup>.

Nonetheless, in all of the excitement that followed in England, with the publication of Thorowgood, Menasseh and the Montezinos narration, the Jewish Indian theory was truly launched. Menasseh was invited to England to confer with Cromwell about fulfilling the final prophecies before the Redemption of Israel<sup>28</sup>. Dury envisaged the Jews, the Lost Tribes, including the Indians, and the Caraites marching into the Holy Land<sup>29</sup>. In 1660, after the Restoration, a new edition of Thorowgood was issued, in which the missionaries to the Indians in Massachusetts wanted to distance themselves a little from Menasseh's non-Calvinist theology. But they were also filled with more and more data about Indian customs, practices and languages that indicated that the Indians were Jews, albeit a bit degenerate in their behavior. Dury wrote a new preface reporting that a Dutch student had had a vision that Charles II would be restored, and that he would bring about the conversion of the Jews<sup>30</sup>.

Later English colonists, like the Quaker William Penn, found it easy to discover signs of Judaism amongst the Indians. Penn wrote back after his first winter in Pennsylvania that it was like being in Duke Street in London, surrounded by Jews<sup>31</sup>. Bishop George Berkeley apparently started

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, "To the Courteous Reader", p. 7.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>28</sup> Katz, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-199.

<sup>29</sup> Dury, "An Epistolicall Discourse to Mr. Thorowgood", p. e4; and R.H. Popkin, "The Lost Tribes, the Caraites and the English Millenarians", *Journal of Jewish Studies*, XXXVII (1986), pp. 213-223.

<sup>30</sup> Dury, preface to T. Thorowgood, *Jewes in America* (London, 1660), 6th and 7th pages of dedicatory preface.

<sup>31</sup> William Penn, *The Selected Works of William Penn*, 3 vols., 4th ed. (London, 1825), Vol. III, pp. 232-233, see XXVI.

with a similar view until he met drunken Indians in Newport, Rhode Island<sup>32</sup>.

The Jewish Indian theory had its virtues. It explained where the redmen came from, and obviated the need for revising our historical framework by adopting some kind of polygenetic theory about the origins of mankind. Some scholars showed that the evidence of Menasseh and Montezinos left much to be desired. In the eighteenth century, when "scientific" anthropology developed, one of its main tasks was to explain the varieties of mankind. Most of the workers in this new science were monogenecists, insisting on a single source of human beings, but then explaining the differences as due to there being several species of men. Linnaeus, Buffon, Blumenbach, to name a few, divided mankind into four or five species. The Indians were one species, but a rather dismal one, ranking far below the Caucasians and the Asiatics in intelligence, and moral character. The Biblical aspect was toned down to the mere assertion that all mankind came from a common source. The differences amongst men were due to climate, education, environment, diet, etc. Presumably the defects of Negroes and Indians could be remedied by bringing them up to the level of Europeans<sup>33</sup>. (Some of the same people asserted that this could also be done for Jews, if they could be brought out of the ghettos, secularized, and made to behave like others in their locales)<sup>34</sup>. In contrast, some forms of polygenesis were being propounded. Hume offered a pretty drastic version that left the blacks inferior forever<sup>35</sup>. His cousin, Lord Kames, offered a more modest view, that some peoples were created after Adam and Eve. These included the inhabitants of the Americas. In view of their later origin they did not have to be connected to the Biblical world<sup>36</sup>.

Against Kames a new form of the Jewish Indian theory was offered that took on Providential significance in the millenarian excitement surrounding the American and French Revolutions. Just after a pretty detailed debunking of the Jewish Indian theory by a Captain Bernard Romans appeared, offering a possibility of divine multiple creations<sup>37</sup>, an English

<sup>32</sup> See Harry M. Bracken, "Bishop Berkeley's Messianism", in R.H. Popkin, ed., *Messianism and Millenarianism in English Literature and Thought*, William Andrew Clark Lectures 1981-82 (Leiden, 1988).

<sup>33</sup> R.H. Popkin, "The Philosophical Basis of Eighteenth-Century Racism", in *Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture*, III (1973), esp. pp. 248-251.

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, Henri Grégoire, *Essai sur la regeneration physique, morale et politique des juifs* (Metz, 1789).

<sup>35</sup> David Hume, "Of National Characters", in *The Philosophical Works*, ed. by T.H. Green and T.H. Grose (London, 1882), III, p. 252n. See R.H. Popkin, "Hume's Racism".

<sup>36</sup> Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Six Sketches on the History of Man, Containing the Progress of Men as Individuals* (Philadelphia, 1776), pp. 13-14, 29-30 and 41-47.

<sup>37</sup> Bernard Romans, *Natural History of East and West Florida* (New York, 1775), pp. 54-55.

trader, James Adair, published his *History of the American Indians* in London in 1775<sup>38</sup>. Adair had been trading with the Indians in the southern English colonies of America for forty years. In this work he offered detailed linguistic, cultural, social, and historical evidence that the Indians were Jews, based on his close observation of their speech and practices. He assured his readers that "The public may depend on the finality of the author, and his descriptions are genuine"<sup>39</sup>. Lord Kames, on the contrary, was offering reasonings contrary "both to revelation and facts"<sup>40</sup>. Then Adair contended that from his most exact observations, made over forty years, that the Indians "lineally descended from the Israelites"<sup>41</sup>. His evidence of the Jewish characteristics of the Indians went on for hundreds of pages. At the time, Adair's evidence was taken most seriously by American historians like Hannah Adams, who wrote an important *History of the Jews*, and appended some of Adair's text<sup>42</sup>. Menasseh's *Hope of Israel* was reissued<sup>43</sup>. Some of the religious thinkers involved in the American Revolution saw Adair's findings as justification for a Providential interpretation of what was happening in the colonies. Charles Crawford, an English nobleman who had moved to America, and who became an important abolitionist and millenarian, saw America's role as that of bringing about the final Providential events before the millennium, the freeing of slaves, the finding of the Lost Tribes and the conversion of the Jews. More significant, Crawford indicated, was that a rabbi who converted to Christianity came to Philadelphia to live with the Lost Tribe Indians, to prepare to lead them to Jerusalem. Apparently the converted rabbi gave up and became a Catholic official instead<sup>44</sup>.

A more important figure, Elias Boudinot, took up the Jewish Indian cause. Boudinot, a lawyer from New Jersey, was one of the leaders of the American Revolution, and possibly the most important figure in the beginning of American fundamentalism<sup>45</sup>. Adair showed his findings to

<sup>38</sup> James Adair, *The History of the American Indians . . . Containing an Account of their Origin, Language, Manners, Religious and Civil Customs* (London, 1775).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>42</sup> Hannah Adams, *The History of the Jews from the Destruction of Jerusalem to the Present Time* (London, 1818), pp. 556-561.

<sup>43</sup> Robert Ingram, *Accounts of the Ten Tribes of Israel being in America, originally published by R. Menasseh ben Israel. With Observations Thereon* (Colchester, 1792).

<sup>44</sup> Charles Crawford, *An Essay on the Propagation of the Gospel, in which there are numerous Facts and Arguments adduced to prove that many of the Indians in America are descended from the Ten Tribes* (Philadelphia, 1799), quoted in Glaser, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-53. Crawford stated that late accounts mention that the rabbi "proved to be an Imposter and that he is now in an elevated Station in the Church of Rome".

<sup>45</sup> See the article on him by Walter Lincoln Whittlesley in the *Dictionary of American Biography*, Vol. II, pp. 477-478.

Boudinot's close ally, Governor Livingston of New Jersey, before the book was published in London. Boudinot heard about this, and was very intrigued. He bought a copy of Adair's book right after the Revolutionary War. He wanted to make his own test. A friend who knew Hebrew sought out an Indian tribe that had never encountered Europeans before. He spoke to them in Hebrew, and decided from their responses, that they were Jews<sup>46</sup>. Boudinot saw the American revolutionary events as pre-millennial developments. He served as the head of the Continental Congress during the Revolution, was the head of the revolutionary state at the end of the war. He was the patron of Alexander Hamilton. When the United States was formed he became a congressman, and later Director of the Mint (like his millenarian predecessor, Sir Isaac Newton)<sup>47</sup>. Boudinot became convinced during the French Revolution that the events predicted in the Book of Revelation were taking place. When Thomas Jefferson was elected president, Boudinot resigned from the government, telling Jefferson that he could not serve in a Deist government, and that he had to prepare for the Second Advent. He founded the two most important fundamentalist organizations in the United States, the American Bible Society and the Society for Ameliorating the Condition of the Jews. He checked with a United States congressman who had been a governmental Indian agent, who confirmed Adair's claims<sup>48</sup>. Then Boudinot wrote *The Star in the West*, pointing out that the Indians, the Lost Tribes, would lead the way into the millennium by returning to Jerusalem<sup>49</sup>. Boudinot, Crawford, Jonathan Edwards and other religious interpreters of the American and French Revolutions could see in the Jewish Indian theory an all important role for the indigenous Americans in developing God's climax to human history, and could see America as central in the drama. Other millenarians, especially British, from Sir William Jones onward, found evidence that the Lost Tribes were in Afghanistan and that the millennial drama involved the true Christians of Europe locating the Afghan Lost Tribes, and so creating the final moments of history without need of any Americans, native or immigrant<sup>50</sup>. Boudinot, Crawford and others rejected the Afghan

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Elias Boudinot, *A Star in the West, or A Humble Attempt to discover the long Lost Tribes of Israel, preparatory to their return to their beloved city, Jerusalem* (Trenton, New Jersey, 1816), pp. 27-28.

<sup>47</sup> Boudinot wrote a friend on May 11, 1796 that he now had "the same berth the famous Sir Isaac Newton enjoyed many years". See George Adams Boyd, *Elias Boudinot, Patriot and Statesman, 1740-1821* (Princeton, 1952).

<sup>48</sup> Boudinot, *Star in the West*, at end of book.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 279-280.

<sup>50</sup> Sir William Jones, "Note to Mr. Vansittart's Paper on the Afgans being descended from the Jews", in *Works* (London, 1807), Vol. IV, p. 70; and George Stanley Faber, *A General and Connected View of the Prophecies, relative to the Conversion, Restoration, Union and Future Glory of the Houses of Judah and Israel* (London, 1809), Vol. I, pp. 69-81.



theory<sup>51</sup>. Some combined the Afghan and Jewish Indian theory, saying the tribes were scattered. Some came to America, and some moved to the east to Afghanistan.

One reason for the decline of the Jewish Indian theory was the shift of attention to the Middle East after Napoleon's Egyptian campaign, coupled with the excited reports of missionaries who had been in India and Afghanistan. But long before the American focus was pushed aside, some further developments had to take place, to secularize and minimize the role of the American Indians. (These were, we will see, rejected by the new American religion of the Mormons, and by the leading American Jewish writer of the period, Mordecai Noah.)

Jefferson was concerned about whether there could be anything to Adair's claims. He asked John Adams, the second president of the United States, what he thought about the matter. They agreed that Adair's evidence was superficial and inconclusive<sup>52</sup>. Based on this discussion, a recent scholar has shown that Jefferson decided that the Indians were probably not part of any Providential scheme<sup>53</sup>. (Boudinot, on the other hand, was converting Indians to make them leaders in the millennium. A Cherokee who took the name "Elias Boudinot", after his sponsor, became a Christian minister. When he married a white member of his congregation, he was ostracized and left to be the unhappy negotiator who gave away the Cherokee territories and rights.)<sup>54</sup> If the Indians were just people, then they had to find their place or role in a secular world, not in a fanciful voyage to the Holy Land. So, it has recently been shown, Jefferson indicated that his decision to purchase the Louisiana territories from Napoleon was in part to find adequate space for secular Indians as they became part of the American polity. The Louisiana Purchase was for Jefferson a commitment that the United States would develop as a secular redeemer nation, solving the problems of mankind by reason and science, and not as part of Scriptural history<sup>55</sup>.

Jefferson politically took the Indians out of divine history. American anthropology sought to do this "scientifically". The so-called school of

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<sup>51</sup> Boudinot, *ibid.*, pp. 30-31; and Charles Crawford, *An Essay on the Propagation of the Gospel, in which there are Numerous Facts and Arguments adduced to prove that many of the Indians in America are descended from the Ten Tribes*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, 1801), pp. 4-25. Crawford was willing to consider other groups than American Indians, might be part of the Lost Tribes, and this could include some Afgans.

<sup>52</sup> Harold Hellenbrand, "Not 'to Destroy But to Fulfil': Jefferson Indians, and Republican Dispensation", *Eighteenth Century Studies*, Vol. XVIII, No. 4 (1985), pp. 523-525, where the references in Adams and Jefferson on the matter are given.

<sup>53</sup> Hellenbrand, *op. cit.*, pp. 527-540.

<sup>54</sup> Ralph Henry Gabriel, *Elias Boudinot & his America* (Norman, OK, 1941).

<sup>55</sup> Hellenbrand, *op. cit.*, pp. 540-549.

American ethnography, headed by Dr. Samuel Morton of Philadelphia, examined the cranial history of various groups, and tried to establish human racial differences in terms of capacity differences. Morton, in his *Crania Americana* and his *Crania Aegyptica*, measured skull capacities, by filling skulls with pepper seed, and then weighing how much pepper seed could go into each skull. Morton had the largest skull collection in the world at the time. He found that the Indians and the Negroes had lower cranial capacity than Caucasians and Asiatics. He also found that Indians from Canada in the north to Tierra del Fuego in the south had the same capacity<sup>56</sup>. On the basis of this, his disciples insisted that Indians and Negroes were separate races, which had separate origins. The Bible was not about them, and they had no role to play in the Scriptural world. The Mound Builders of the Ohio Valley and the uncivilized Indians were indigenous to the western hemisphere. They were an inferior race compared to the Asiatic or Caucasian ones, and had no special spiritual or intellectual destiny<sup>57</sup>.

Morton's ethnology was adopted primarily as a "scientific proof" of Negro inferiority, and as a justification for continuing the slave system in America. Morton's disciples tried to convince Southerners to adopt the new ethnology over Scripture as a defense of their world. The Swiss biologist Louis Agassiz came to the United States in the 1840s, and became the leading scientific advocate of Mortonism, with its blatant racist conclusions about the status of Negroes<sup>58</sup>. Frederick Douglass, the leading black spokesman before the Civil War, and Alexander von Humboldt fought against this polygenetic racism as a *desolante* theory that condemned much of mankind to perpetual slavery and inferiority<sup>59</sup>.

The application of ethnology to the Indians justified taking away their lands, driving them westward, and decimating them. It is interesting that Morton's view, insisting on the indigenous, autochthonous character of the American Indians, rejected the growing interest in a theory advanced by Menasseh ben Israel, that the Indians came from the Orient. From the

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<sup>56</sup> Samuel Morton, *Crania Americana* (Philadelphia and London, 1839). On Morton, see William Stanton, *The Leopard's Spots* (Chicago, 1960), pp. 25-44; and R.H. Popkin, "Pre-Adamism in 19th Century American Thought: 'Speculative Biology' and Racism", *Philosophia*, VIII (1978), pp. 218-221.

<sup>57</sup> Josiah C. Nott, *Two Lectures on the Connection between the Biblical and Physical History of Man* (New York, 1849); and Nott and George A. Gliddon, *Types of Mankind* (Philadelphia, 1854).

<sup>58</sup> See Louis Agassiz's two articles in the *Christian Examiner and Religious Miscellany*, XLVIII (1850), "Geographical Distribution of Animals", and XLIX (1850), "The Diversity of Origin of the Human Races".

<sup>59</sup> Frederick Douglass, "The Claims of the Negro Ethnologically Considered", reprinted in Louis Ruchames, ed., *Racial Thought in America*, Vol. I (New York, 1979), pp. 478-492 and Alexander von Humboldt, *Cosmos*, trans. by E.C. Otte (London, 1888), p. 368.

time of the discovery of the Behring Straits, it was realized that people could have walked from Asia to America. A Mexican Jesuit, Alexo de Orrio, joyfully announced that this destroyed the pre-Adamite theory<sup>60</sup>. The Indians could be connected with the Chinese, the Mongolians, who in turn had been connected to the descendants of survivors of Noah's Ark. Mortonism disconnected the Indians and Africans from Scriptural history, and left them to be dominated by the Caucasians and the Asiatics. Morton's followers de-emphasized the Scriptural basis of human history, in exchange for so-called scientific factors – the amount of pepper-seed that can be held in a cranium. (And it has been found that Morton "fudged" his data to get his "scientific" results)<sup>61</sup>. Mortonism paved the way for a secular racist account of the Indians and Negroes.

Before such a view became predominant, at least in America, one more stage of the Jewish Indian view emerged. While Boudinot, Crawford and other millenarians saw the Indians as the Lost Tribes, new evidence emerged, and two new theories were offered, one that of the leading Jewish spokesman, Mordecai Noah, the other by the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith.

The new evidence were some artifacts that were discovered: one, phylacteries that were found in an Indian burial mound in Pittsfield, Massachusetts; another a Hebrew inscription outside New Milford, Connecticut; the third, a Hebrew tomb in Ohio, added to the alleged resemblances that Lord Kingsborough thought he had found in the Aztec codices to ancient Hebrew motifs. Lord Kingsborough published nine folio volumes of the codices, magnificently illustrated, with copious notes from Menasseh, Adair and others, to prove the Indians, especially those of Central America, were Jews. Although he bankrupted himself in the process of publishing the material, he convinced only the already convinced, and became a laughing-stock to others<sup>62</sup>.

The Hebrew inscription in New Milford was examined by America's greatest Christian Hebraist, Ezra Stiles, President of Yale, who guessed it was somebody's name. No one in the area could be found who was Jewish or who knew Hebrew, so a suggestive mystery remained. The phylacteries

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<sup>60</sup> Alexo de Orrio, Father Francisco Xavier, *Solution to the Great Problem of the Population of the Americas, in which on the Basis of the Holy Book There is Discovered an Easy Path for the Transmigration of Men from One Continent to the Other; and How There Could Pass to the New World, not only Beasts of Service, but Also the Wild and Harmful Animals and by This Occasion One Completely Settles The Ravings of the Pre-Adamites, which Relied on the Difficult Objection until Now Not Properly Solved* (Mexico, 1763).

<sup>61</sup> Steven Jay Gould, "Morton's Ranking of Races by Cranial Capacity. Unconscious manipulation of data may be a scientific norm", *Science*, Vol. 200 (1978), pp. 503-509.

<sup>62</sup> Edward King, Viscount Kingsborough, *Antiquities of Mexico* (London, 1830-48), 9 Vols..

were a more exciting find, when it was realized that these are used by a Jew in his morning prayers. The physical object was found around 1820, halfway down a pile of Indian bones in a burial mound. Because of the Hebrew letters contained in the object, Christian scholars from Harvard were consulted, who identified the object for what it was. But how did it get to where it was found? An intensive investigation was carried on to find out if any Jewish traders had been in Pittsfield, if any captured British soldiers held there were Jewish, with negative results. The great Jewish convert, the Rev. Joseph Frey, who gave 30,000 sermons in America, said he had never spoken in Pittsfield, and the phylacteries were not his<sup>63</sup>.

The literature of the period indicates that this discovery was taken very seriously as pointing to the possibility that the Indians were Jewish. No other explanation could be found for the phylacteries being where they were found. The item was deposited with the Massachusetts Historical Society for further study. By now, when some of us would like to see what was discovered, however, the item has been lost. The late Rabbi Arthur Chiel, who wrote an article on the matter, and turned up a lot of literature, some rather incredible, in the period 1820-1825, on the subject, also found that the phylacteries had been in the Antiquarian Society of Worcester, Massachusetts, but that they had disappeared<sup>64</sup>.

The tomb is interesting, but also unlocatable. The important American historian Hubert Howe Bancroft, in his history of the native races of America, presented a chapter on the origins of the Indians, setting out the prevailing theories. The Jewish Indian theory was taken up, and disowned by Bancroft, but it was described as having strong evidence in its favor. The evidence consisted of the phylacteries and the tomb. The latter, Bancroft said, was discovered by his father, a minister in Ohio. It had Hebrew inscriptions indicating it was from the 1st or 2nd centuries, c.e. Bancroft's father deposited it in the local historical society, from whence it seems to have disappeared<sup>65</sup>.

The news of physical remains reinforced the believers. One major believer was the Jewish politician, publisher and playwright Mordecai Noah,

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<sup>63</sup> See Ethan Smith, *View of the Hebrews or the Tribes of Israel in America*, 2nd ed. (Poultney, Vermont, 1825), pp. 217-225.

<sup>64</sup> Arthur Chiel, "Strange Tales of the Tefillin," *Jewish Digest*, Vol. 80, pp. 56-58. See also Lee M. Friedman, "The Phylacteries found at Pittsfield, Mass.," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, XXV (1917), pp. 81-85.

<sup>65</sup> Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The Natives Races of America, Primitive History, Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft*, Vol. V (San Francisco, 1883), pp. 9 ff. review the literature on the Jewish Indian theory; pp. 77-97 go over the evidence. The phylacteries are discussed on p. 92 and the tombstone on pp. 96-97. For a critical evaluation of the evidence of the tombstone, see David Philipson, "Are there Traces of the Ten Lost Tribes in Ohio?," *Proceedings of the American Jewish Historical Society*, XIII (1905), pp. 37-46.

who has usually been written off as a crank for setting up a Jewish state on Grand Island off Buffalo. To appreciate his role, one has to realize that he was *the* leading public Jew in the America of his time. He spoke out for Judaism in many ways. He was a public official who became the U.S. consul in Tunis. He received a letter from James Monroe firing him from his position because of his religion<sup>66</sup>. (This is the only such publicly known case in American history.) Noah wrote to Jefferson, Adams and Madison and got them to write statements that Jews were co-equal citizens of the United States and could not be punished or discriminated against officially because of their religion<sup>67</sup>. He also argued publicly with the millenarian Christians who wanted to convert the Jews.

His plan for a Jewish state seems to have grown out of his meeting with the abbé Henri Grégoire in Paris at the end of the Napoleonic era. Elsewhere I have shown that Noah's Jewish state was planned as a continuation of the Paris *Sanhedrin*. (Noah did not seem to notice Grégoire's millenarianism, or his hopes for the conversion of the Jews, and Grégoire defended Noah against the wrath of the chief rabbi of France, who had been one of the leaders of the Paris Sanhedrin, Grand rabbi Cologna)<sup>68</sup>.

Relevant to the theme of this paper is that in Noah's Jewish state, whose constitution was carefully worked out so it conformed to American law, and allowed co-equal status to non-Jews, all of the Jewish groups in the world were to be invited to rest and prepare for the Messianic Jewish state to come. Included in the invitation were the poor Jews Noah had met in north Africa, the oppressed Jews of Eastern Europe, the fortunate American Jews, the Caraites, and the Jewish Indians. All would be reunited as the Jewish people would come to know each other, to appreciate each other, and to prepare together to go to the ultimate redemptive state in Palestine<sup>69</sup>. I think Noah's passion for the Caraites came from Grégoire who regarded them as pure Jews, uncorrupted by rabbinical superstitions<sup>70</sup>. The passion for the Indians was Noah's version of the Jewish Indian theo-

<sup>66</sup> The letter is published in Mordecai Noah, *Travels in England, France, Spain and the Barbary States in the Years 1813, 1814 and 1815* (New York, 1819), p. 241.

<sup>67</sup> These letters are published in Noah, *Travels*, Appendix No. VI, pp. XXV-XXVI.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. R.H. Popkin, "Mordecai Noah, the Abbé Grégoire and the Paris Sanhedrin", *Modern Judaism*, II (1982), pp. 131-148. In Noah's speech opening the Jewish state, he paid tribute to "my venerable and pious friend the Bishop Grégoire, to whom the Jews owe an incalculable debt of gratitude".

<sup>69</sup> Mordecai Noah, "Proclamation to the Jews", in Max J. Köhler, "Some Early American Zionist Projects", *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, VIII (1900), Appendix II, pp. 106-113.

<sup>70</sup> Henry Grégoire, *Histoire des Sectes religieuses* (Paris, 1528-1845), Tome III, pp. 306 ff.; and R.H. Popkin, "Les Caraïtes et l'émancipation des Juifs", *Dix-Huitième Siècle*, XIII (1981), pp. 137-139, and "Mordecai Noah, the Abbé Grégoire and the Paris Sanhedrin", p. 138.

ry, drawn from Menasseh, Adair, Boudinot and others. He set forth the theory over and over again in public lectures in the United States. It is sad to report that with all of this good will towards the poor, the oppressed, the benighted Jews everywhere, no Jew, including Noah himself, ever set foot in his Jewish state. It had a rousing inauguration ceremony at Buffalo, with a parade, speeches and music, and it promptly died. Noah was the most prominent Jewish advocate of the Jewish Indian theory, and seemed oblivious to the growing "scientific" opposition.

Another intriguing case of Jewish interest in the Jewish Indian theory appears in the missionary report by the Scottish missionaries who travelled across Europe to the Holy Land trying to convert Jews. As they started out, they stopped in Boulogne. There they met "a very interesting Jew, a person of education and agreeable manners, who spoke English fluently"<sup>71</sup>. The person unfortunately is not named. He had been rich, but had used up his money "in travelling for the sake of his brethren", all over North America, investigating whether the Indians were really descended from the Ten Tribes. He lived with different Indian tribes, learned their languages, adopted their customs. And he came to the negative conclusion, the Indians were not Jews, and now was trying to regain some funds so he could go to Palestine<sup>72</sup>.

A different and more religious version of the Jewish Indian theory, influenced by the "evidence" and by Noah's views or gained some strength from them, is Mormonism.

The Mormon movement has been described as the first real indigenous American religion, building on the Biblical tradition and the American situation. It claimed new revelatory material that showed that some of the ancient Jews went to America instead of Babylon at the time of the destruction of the First Temple, that Jesus preached to them in America, and that they, the latter-day saints, were the bearers of Christianity and would lead it into the millennium. The Mormon claim is not that all Indians are Jews, but that a remnant of the ancient Hebrews exists in America and will join with the followers of Joseph Smith. The Lost Tribes are not the Indians, but are still hidden somewhere in the Arctic and will reappear at the end of time. Although Mormonism is one of the fastest growing religions, it has not made the Jewish Indian theory more acceptable to "enlightened people" in America or elsewhere<sup>73</sup>.

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<sup>71</sup> A.A. Bonar and R.M. McCheyne, *Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews from the Church of Scotland in 1839* (Edinburgh, 1842), p. 6. I wish to thank Ms. Sara Katchav for calling this to my attention.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>73</sup> See H.H. Bancroft's account of Mormonism, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-102; and Glaser, *Indians or Jews?*, "American Eschatology and the Mormons", pp. 60-73.

The anthropologists have moved from Morton's theory of the indigenous Indian, to the Mongolian origin theory, with the forebears of the present Indians having crossed over the Behring Straits about 25,000 years ago. With providence and theology cast aside, the Indians do not have to be connected to the Biblical world. Late nineteenth-century anthropology saw the Indians as pretty primitive. American developments made them the most dispossessed group in the country. Nobody would want to relate them to the Bible, or to any other group than the Siberians or the Mongols. As secular anti-Semitism developed, the Europeans and Americans saw no need to be descended from the Jews. So, then, who needs a Jewish Indian? What role could such a double outcast play?

The Jewish Indian theory fell victim to a scientific movement aimed at getting rid of the Scriptural framework of human history and substituting a secular one, of migrating peoples. If there were superior providential people, they could be British Israelites (a late nineteenth-century claim that the Anglo-Saxons are the Lost Tribes)<sup>74</sup>, or Aryans. But the easiest thing to do was to measure people by their technical abilities and their ability to survive in modern industrial society.

The immense change in the evaluation of peoples left the Jewish Indian theory a bad joke, an anachronistic hangover from an unfortunate religious past. If anyone still believed it, he or she was a menace to the scientific understanding of man. The theory which in Dury and Thorowgood's version, or in Menasseh's, was to intensify the pursuit of the millennium, made no sense anymore.

The collapse of the Jewish Indian theory in the face of nineteenth-century science is a casualty of the war between science and theology. Part of the price that has been paid is that we have lost our ability to understand the force and significance of the theory for at least two hundred years, and to appreciate Menasseh ben Israel's serious contribution in this area. Further, it has made it difficult or impossible to interpret or evaluate evidence that does not fit with the Mongolian origin theory.

Cyrus Gordon has marshalled a fair amount of evidence in his book *Before Columbus*, that there were Mediterranean contacts with America going back to Phoenician and Roman times<sup>75</sup>. Scientists are afraid to take his evidence seriously because they see the Jewish Indian theory looming up again. Gordon has pointed to Phoenician inscriptions in Georgia and Brazil, to Roman and Hebrew coins found in Central and North America, and to other Mediterranean artifacts. He has posed a plausible, non-

<sup>74</sup> Art, "British Israelites", *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. 4, p. 381.

<sup>75</sup> C. Gordon, *Before Columbus; Links between the Old World and Ancient America* (New York, 1971).

theological explanation, that early seafarers had crossed the Atlantic Ocean. Nobody finds it implausible that the Hawaiians travelled over 9,000 miles across the Pacific Ocean from their point of origin to their present location. But it is regarded as nonsensical when applied to the Atlantic Ocean (even though Cabral, the accidental discoverer of Brazil, was about 200 miles off course, rounding the coast of West Africa, when he landed in South America)<sup>76</sup>. All sorts of navigational problems are raised that had not been solved until the fifteenth century. Melanesians crossed the Pacific in open boats, but Mediterraneans could not have done a much shorter voyage with large sailing ships. So Gordon's evidence is ignored rather than that it revives the possibility that Mediterraneans got to the New World, that Hebrews might have, and that Jews might have lived somewhere in the Americas before Columbus. (Both the nineteenth-century historian George Bancroft, and Cyrus Gordon point out that there was a group in Tennessee of Mediterranean character who were driven into the wilderness by the Indians.)

The rise and fall of the Jewish Indian theory is a measure of the change of the roles of religion and science in accounting for the world. The discovery of America, made in a world which saw its history delineated in Scripture, raised a most serious problem of accounting for the origins of the American Indians. To avoid the polygenetic explanation of La Peyrère limiting Scriptural history to Jewish history, theorists tried to link the Indians to some already known group. The Jewish Indian theory was one of many possibilities. The joining of this to the millennial expectations of the mid-seventeenth century led to the excitement over Menasseh's statement in *The Hope of Israel*. Although Menasseh may have been trying to limit the Jewish Indian theory to a small group that could be part of a Lost Tribe, his contemporaries saw amazing implications. The conversion of the Indians was the prelude to the conversion of the European Jews, which was the prelude to the Second Coming and the millennium. Menasseh, in spite of his cautious efforts, became the official spokesman for the millenarian Jewish Indian theory, and it was his account that was debated. The discussion was revived and revitalized by Adair and by those who saw the American Revolution as a great pre-millennial event. The secular deism of Jefferson and the "scientific" ethnology of Morton sought to put the

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<sup>76</sup> Gordon, *Before Columbus*. In his *Riddles in History* (New York, 1974), Gordon discussed a Hebrew inscription c. 100 A.D. for a grave in Tennessee, pp. 145-146. See also G. Bancroft, *A History of the United States of America* (New York, 1898), Vol. II, p. 131; he refers to the Lost Tribes of Israel who "have been discovered in the back cabins of North America, now in the valleys of Tennessee . . .". Bancroft had his doubts and felt that "the pious curiosity of Christendom . . . has created a special disposition to discover a connection between them [the aborigines of America] and the Hebrews".



Indian in his secular place, as inferior inhabitant of North and South America. Later anthropologists made him a descendant of Mongolians rather than of the original people of Scripture. Only in Mordecai Noah's version or in Mormonism was there still place for the Indians, or some of them, in providential history. The Jewish Indian theory has become an intellectual pariah to be avoided even if there is evidence in its favor. Even in the present resurgence of millenarian and messianic thought, the American Indians seem to have been left aside, to be accounted for as wanderers from Siberia who have nothing further to contribute. Thus a theory that could have been such a vital explanation and source of hope for two centuries has been discarded as science and American rationalism found other ways of explaining the Indians and their minimal place in history. The displacement of the Jews from national history from the French Revolution until Zionism left no need to relate Jews and Indians. They could both be outcasts in one world or another. The present flowering of Judaism in America and Israel needs no connection with the ancient inhabitants of the New World to account for what is happening. And so, there seems little left for the theory to explain, and little desire to have it explain anything. So perishes the glory of what was an exciting and intriguing theory!

## MENASSEH BEN ISRAEL AND THE WORLD OF THE NON-JEW

HENRY MÉCHOULAN

This paper aims to show how Menasseh ben Israel perceived the non-Jewish world in his writings and to examine the language he used and its attendant theological, moral and political connotations. Several authors have brought hardly sympathetic, even unjust judgments to bear on him<sup>1</sup> for they do not consider the rich, difficult and complicated age in which our rabbi lived, and fail to take into account the fact that his discourse was addressed to two kinds of non-Jews: the Christian world on the one hand, and the world of former crypto-Jews on the other. The latter indeed threw off their mask of assumed Catholicism but arrived in Amsterdam from the Iberian Peninsula stripped of all Jewish learning. They confused the observance of a few holidays and Biblical scholarship in its broadest sense with Judaism itself, and they knew no Hebrew even long after having settled there<sup>2</sup>. Menasseh ben Israel had therefore two battles to fight: against the heterodoxy created by his own community (we should not forget that he lived through the huge crises provoked by Uriel da Costa, Spinoza and Juan de Prado), and against Calvinist orthodoxy which made no secret either of its anti-Judaism, nor of its identificatory empathy. With only few exceptions which he emphasizes, Menasseh ben Israel had to constantly confront Christian proselytizing from which he was able to keep his distance with a benevolent and rigorous steadfastness. We must bear in mind that he was the contemporary of Voetius and Hoornbeeck, who were hostile to the Jews and awaited their conversion as an event necessary to the Second Coming<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See my introduction to *Espérance d'Israël* (Paris, 1979), pp. 37-38. Graetz and Gebhardt are amongst the harshest critics of our rabbi.

<sup>2</sup> Menasseh ben Israel, *Conciliador* . . . (Frankfurt, 1632), Al lector, unpaginated: "Va esta escritura en la pobreza de mi romance porque escrivo conforme el tiempo me da lugar, pretendiendo aprovechar a los señores de mi nación española (a quien dedico esta obra) que por la mayor parte carecen de la intelección de la lengua hebrea . . .".

Abraham Pereyra, in *La Certeza del Camino* (Amsterdam, 1666) confesses that he is one of those who do not know Hebrew: ". . . los que carecemos de las sagradas letras" (prologue, unpaginated). See my edition, *Hispanidad y judaismo en tiempos de Espinoza* (Salamanca, 1987), p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> See P. Toon, *Puritans, the Millenium and the Future of Israel. Puritan Eschatology* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 141 and *passim*.

His opinions were sought by the Republic of Letters, he was questioned by troubled millenarians, and was pressed to appear before Cromwell by his fellow Jews. Menasseh ben Israel responded and reacted to all these demands and pressures not only as a rabbi but as the representative of European Judaism, for educated Europe turned only to him and did not begrudge him its esteem<sup>4</sup>. Far from being a weak man, Menasseh ben Israel was an impassioned and involved rabbi, perfectly aware of his real importance, and often, we must admit, rather too aware<sup>5</sup>. If he did not modify Judaism from a doctrinal point of view, he knew how to make it respected and how to present its universal message with supreme skill, by teaching the non-Jewish world that Jews and Christians were indissolubly linked in spite of their fundamental difference, which was not an obstacle at all in the eyes of the Lord. In short, Menasseh ben Israel was in a position of permanent controversy, but was able to transform this tension into a peaceful, instructive and informed dialogue, a dialogue which he wanted to see taken up by all: "I would like my works to win universal approval"<sup>6</sup>. A desire all the more difficult to realize if we keep in mind that a wide range of competing Christian denominations was displayed before Menasseh ben Israel's eyes and he would have to choose with whom to form his allegiance.

But before considering the doctrinal options open to our rabbi, let us remember that neither he nor the Amsterdam community lived in a ghetto. There were many and varied relations with the non-Jewish world. Was it not Rembrandt who was to illustrate the *Piedra gloriosa*? We know that thinkers like Vossius, Grotius, Salmasius, Ravius and Beverovicus had recourse to the learning of our rabbi, who was the close friend of the famous Episcopius and above all Barlaeus. In his *Vindiciae judaeorum*<sup>7</sup> Menasseh recounts that Barlaeus, the modern Virgil, had composed several verses in his honor, without the slightest proselytizing motive behind them, as we can indeed see from the last elegiac couplets of the epigram he wrote in 1635 for the *De creatione problemata*<sup>8</sup>. But, as F.F. Blok tells us, this recognition was by no means unanimous<sup>9</sup>. The controversy stirred up by Barlaeus

<sup>4</sup> "Respondi tambien a mas de CL epistolas de hombres doctos de toda Europa sobre muchas preclaradas dudas y questiones . . .", in *Conciliador* . . . (Amsterdam, 1641), Al lector, unpaginated.

<sup>5</sup> See, amongst others, the preface to the *Conciliador* (second part, 1641), *op. cit.*, and the envoy "al lector" of *De la fragilidad humana* (Amsterdam, 1642).

<sup>6</sup> *De la fragilidad humana* . . . , *op. cit.*, Al lector, unpaginated.

<sup>7</sup> *Vindiciae Judaeorum* . . . (London, 1656), 4th count of indictment, 1°.

<sup>8</sup> See F.F. Blok on this epigram in "Quelques humanistes de la Jérusalem de l'Occident", in *Acta conventus neo-latini amstelodamensis*, Proceedings of the Second International Congress of Neo-Latin Studies (Munich, 1979), pp. 120-121.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

had its effect upon Menasseh ben Israel: "As for Menasseh, he experienced problems amidst the Judaeo-Portuguese community which was clearly unimpressed by the anti-Jewish fervour which came about on our rabbi's account. And it was at exactly the same period that Menasseh, having begged the authorities to let him teach Hebrew at the Athenaeum (something which he could not have done without the knowledge of Professors Vossius and Barlaeus), felt the sadness of being refused that honor"<sup>10</sup>. The Estates of Holland, to whom Menasseh ben Israel wanted to dedicate his *Conciliador*, rejected the application after consulting the theology faculty at Leiden<sup>11</sup>. So Menasseh was forced to cope with his Christian environment at once sincere and amicable, yet resistant and mistrustful. It was in these circumstances that he had to define the theological status of the non-Jews so that the world of the *goyim* might know what the Jews thought about them. Contrary to the prevailing soteriology and somewhat contrary to Calvinism which maintained that all the works of man performed outside the Christian faith, even if they issued from just men, were sins, Menasseh affirms on several occasions the universality of the Biblical message. When addressing Henri Hoefiser in the dedication of the *De la resurrección de los muertos*<sup>12</sup>, he gives important indications about the place of the non-Jews in the Jewish tradition. In the envoy, the rabbi informs his interlocutor that the Jews believe that God handed down the seven Noachian precepts to all nations<sup>13</sup>. Those who follow them can be considered pious men. Menasseh ben Israel refines and develops his thought in the second book of chapter IX, where he reflects upon the resurrection of the dead *goyim*. Not only will they be brought back to life, but they will also have the privilege of partaking in the bliss of the messianic age<sup>14</sup>. Our author bases his argument on several authorities<sup>15</sup> whom he interprets in the broadest sense, excluding no nation from the Last Judgement. He ends the chapter with a reference to the *Zohar* in which it is said that "those who acted with kindness towards Israel in the period of captivity will rejoice in great happiness in the glorious century"<sup>16</sup>. Menasseh does not give any more details, but these lines are crucial in that they constitute a warning which transcends individuals, and forms the basis of a theologico-political reflection on the non-Jewish world to be found in nearly all of our rabbi's works.

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>12</sup> (Amsterdam, 1636), Epistola dedicatoria, unpaginated.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

The presence of Jews in all countries of the world is part of the plan of divine providence, because they carry with them the word of God. The *galut* only makes sense if we understand God's regard for all his creatures: "The Lord let the people of Israel be captive and scattered them amongst other peoples so that they might, as pilgrims, unite them in faith, for God does not wish for the death of the ungodly"<sup>17</sup>. Twenty years later, in the *Piedra gloriosa*, Menasseh ben Israel quotes the *Yalkut* and recalls that all those who have treated the people of Israel with mercy will be received by the Messiah and know happiness<sup>18</sup>. But before he specifies this promised outcome or defines the messianic age for the non-Jews, our rabbi draws up a balance-sheet of the good and bad actions of the *goyim* throughout the history of the world, along with their immediate consequences, fruits of the omnipresent justice of God. It goes without saying that in the recording of good actions which are rewarded *hic et nunc*, the United Dutch Provinces had already been thanked and held first place in the expression of a deeply felt gratitude addressed to Frederick-Henry in 1642<sup>19</sup>. Had the Stadthouder understood this address properly, he would very quickly have seen the connection between the welcome accorded to the Jews – who regarded Holland as their new homeland<sup>20</sup> – and the exceptional prosperity which this country was enjoying. Menasseh later turns to the Gentlemen of the East India Company and recounts in the panegyric style the story of the birth of the United Dutch Provinces which had set themselves free from Spanish tyranny. Their military successes, both on land and at sea, were extraordinary and to be greatly admired and our author's conclusion emphasizes at the same time the protection which the Jews enjoyed: "May Almighty God always grant the Gentlemen of the Council success in their undertakings and guarantee the well-being of the country"<sup>21</sup>. Conversely, the misery of the wicked is explored in chapter XVIII of *Esperança de Israel* where, again with consummate skill, Menasseh underlines the direct relationship which existed between an undisturbed condition of the Jews and the prosperity of countries which accepted them. This is a weighty argument which our rabbi was to employ several times, particularly when he was received by Cromwell. But the economic argument is not the only one to be propounded. With the majority of contem-

<sup>17</sup> *Piedra gloriosa o de la estatua de Nebuchadnesar* (Amsterdam, 1655), p. 94.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Gratulação de Menasseh ben Israel em nome de sua Nação ao celcíssimo príncipe de Orange Frederique Henrique* (Amsterdam, 1642). This piece is found at the end of the *De la fragilidad humana*. See our article "A propos de la visite de Frédéric-Henri . . . une lettre inédite de Menasseh ben Israël à David de Wilhem", *Lias*, V, no. 1 (1978), pp. 81-86.

<sup>20</sup> In this work, Menasseh informs Frederick-Henry that the Jews pray for him and his country's prosperity.

<sup>21</sup> *Conciliador* . . . (second part, 1641), Epistola dedicatoria, unpaginated.

porary Protestants, Menasseh is convinced of the imminence of the messianic age. Wisely he declines to propose a date<sup>22</sup>, but is obliged nevertheless to assure the non-Jews who were sympathetic to Israel that divine recognition will at that time be accorded to them. That is why he takes up the theme of the just non-Jew of the *De la resurrección de los muertos* and reworks it in his penultimate work, the *Piedra gloriosa*. Here, the assurances are more developed but above all more specific in terms of a historical panorama which moves from the prophecy of Daniel to the seventeenth century. Dedicated to Isaac Vossius in memory of his father whose sincere kindness to our rabbi is well-known, the *Piedra gloriosa o de la estatua de Nebuchadnesar* has, amongst other goals, that of reassuring the good and disturbing the wicked *goyim*, still using the same argument: the power of the gratitude of the Jewish people in the messianic period. We should nevertheless point out several other particularly interesting points. The vast historical expanse treated in the gloss on the prophecy of Daniel allows Menasseh ben Israel to insist upon the positive role of the non-Jews in the story of humanity and in the working of divine revelation. Nabuchodonosor and the servants of Pharaoh were chosen as the instruments of God whose mercy extends to all, and Ruth and Jethro are cited because God does not deny the worth of any man's good action<sup>23</sup>. This is the fundamental point to be made: Menasseh ben Israel highlights the existence of a justice in itself, independent of the origins and faiths of the men who put it into practice. The unity of God can give rise to different religions, which are no less valuable as long as they are practised with piety, and form men who are just. Our rabbi quotes the first chapter of *Avoda Zara* in which it is said that the *goy* who lives and works within the law will be rewarded. But this law, and this is the crucial point, is a natural law: it is this law which dictates all the universal imperatives of the *tsedaka* to the conscience. This natural law is part of an eternal law: here Menasseh's line of thought is drawn directly from Thomas Aquinas whom he so likes to quote: "There is in men a certain natural law which shares, of course, in the eternal law, according to which they distinguish between good and evil"<sup>24</sup>. One can also see here the influence of the close friends of the rabbi, that is Barlaeus, the apostle of a *pietas universalis*<sup>25</sup>. Let us look at the terms in which this natural law is expressed in the *Piedra gloriosa*: "Live with fairness and justice, do wrong to no man, do not encroach on the good of another, rob no man of his honor, behave charitably to others, live soberly. Is it pos-

<sup>22</sup> *Esperança de Israel* (Amsterdam, 1650). See p. 159 of our edition, *op. cit.*

<sup>23</sup> *Piedra gloriosa*, *op. cit.*, pp. 240-241.

<sup>24</sup> *Summa Theologicae*, Ia IIae, article 1, question 91, conclusion.

<sup>25</sup> F.F. Blok, *art. cit.*, p. 124.

sible that he who conducts himself thus will not have his worth recognised? . . . The name of the Lord is great among the people and all adore the first cause, each in his own way. He who lives according to the law of nature – *ley de la naturaleza* – is reputed holy and will enjoy reward. And according to the writings of the ancients, there will be room enough for the holy men of all nations of the world in the messianic age’’<sup>26</sup>. In the commentary on Zechariah (chapter 9) Menasseh ben Israel insists upon the encounter between Jews and non-Jews at the time of the coming of the Messiah, an encounter which will transform itself into an allegiance which the Jews would not refuse. And in his conclusion he reiterates that all those who do not harm the Jews will be received by the Messiah. Let us remain for a moment with these fundamental passages, and consider the distance which separates them from the passages concerning the non-Jews in *De la resurrección de los muertos*. The discourse of the *Piedra gloriosa* is completely new in that it is no longer a question of obedience to Noachian precepts in order to share in the salvation of the messianic age. Universality is taken to its highest degree and becomes moreover a means of specifying the very nature of the messianic age, which we will discuss later. Why does this change occur and why does he relate only to Jewish texts which he had not previously dealt with? We can advance several hypotheses. In 1636, later seductively attractive Christian “overtures” had still not been made. Neither Vieira, La Peyrère, Felgenhauer nor John Dury had yet embarked upon their well-meant but very dangerous attempts to appropriate Jewish messianism. In the works which pre-date the *Piedra gloriosa* Menasseh is therefore secure enough to reply in a brief, earnest and politic way. But after 1650 comes the peak of a fermenting millenarian Christianity and a fevered expectation of the Second Coming, which the *Esperança de Israel* did nothing to calm. The Jews were relieved by many of the burden of the crime of deicide. Did La Peyrère not write in his *Du Rappel des Juifs* which Menasseh ben Israel knew well<sup>27</sup>: “The sin which the Jews committed against Jesus was a sin of ingratitude, for Jesus Christ, eldest brother of the Jews, having come into the world to save the Jews, was not recognised by his brothers, the Jews’’<sup>28</sup>. The return of the Jews, affirms La Peyrère, will be just as much “the fulfillment of the Gentiles’’<sup>29</sup>. “Jews and gentiles will be united in this return in order to rejoice together and to praise God with each other, and to constitute a single chosen and blessed body’’<sup>30</sup>. La Peyrère advances a minimal soteriology, rid of the dogmas

<sup>26</sup> *Piedra gloriosa*, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

<sup>27</sup> Menasseh ben Israel quotes this work in the *Vindiciae Judaearum*.

<sup>28</sup> *Du rappel des Juifs* (place of publication unknown, 1643), p. 169.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

which might embarrass Jewish consciences, but his call might yet be disturbing to them. This kind of approach is not unique. Menasseh ben Israel – as we showed in our introduction to *The Hope of Israel* – was obliged to welcome these “overtures” warmly for their renovation of the image of the Jew in the Christian world whilst remaining very vigilant: he knew the dangers that Judaism would encounter if the Jews walked the path of confusion.

A.J. Saraiva, in his article on Menasseh ben Israel and the Fifth Empire<sup>31</sup>, was also very aware that these approaches were effective and appealing. In effect, it now depended solely on the Jews, that is to say on their recognition of the divinity of Christ, whether he returns finally to save humanity. In his discussion of Nathaniel Homes’ and Henry Jessey’s Latin letter (1649) to Menasseh ben Israel, Saraiva notes: “The two English theologians offered their services on bended knee to the whole Jewish people, ‘since we become your proselytes and you become our proselytes, let us enter, all of us, just as Isaiah and Ezekiel and the prophets said, into one church’”<sup>32</sup>.

Our rabbi adopts the excellent strategy of showing the non-Jewish world that universality was not the monopoly of Christianity. That is why, in the *Piedra gloriosa*, he prefers natural law to the Noachian precepts: thus, pre-empting proselytizing advances, he reverses the “overtures” by reminding everyone, Catholics and Protestants, that their place will be relative to the Jews when they are restored to their original homeland. He dismisses both parties, Protestants and Catholics. The latter effectively stated at the Council of Trent that “neither the Gentiles through the forces of Nature, nor the Jews through the letter of the Mosaic Law, were able to deliver themselves from slavery and sin . . . and that although Jesus Christ had died for all men, nevertheless, only those to whom the worth of his suffering had been revealed, would reap the benefits of his death”<sup>33</sup>. Menasseh implies throughout the text that the Jews as a whole, as a chosen people of priests, would, in every way, play the role of the Christ. The mission of this people makes sense only in terms of a universal salvation, and not in lonely return to Zion where they might selfishly enjoy carnal pleasures in their reclaimed homeland – as those hostile to the Jews would have it believed. Our rabbi defines the restoration of Israel in theological terms understandable to all. The question is one of a virtuous life, the hap-

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<sup>31</sup> “Antonio Vieira, Menasseh ben Israël et le Cinquième Empire”, *Studia Rosenthaliana*, VI, no. 1 (1972), pp. 25-56.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>33</sup> P. Sarpi, *Histoire du concile de Trente*, trans. Amelot de la Houssaie (Amsterdam, 1699), p. 205.



pininess of souls, of study, in short, of the fruition of beatitude<sup>34</sup>. Jews and non-Jews united in the joy of a single faith and in prayer to the Almighty? No. The Jews would continue to be the chosen people after the messianic age. There are no weak points in our rabbi's steadfastness on this issue. He allows for no menacing ambiguity with regard to the non-Jews. After the coming of the Messiah, they will be able to take part in the general re-joining. God will recognize the merits of Jews and non-Jews alike, and He will punish the wicked man no matter who he is. But is that to say that the non-Jews will have the same privileges as Israel? "That much I have not said"<sup>35</sup>. What does this reservation mean? To find out, we must return to the beginning of the *Piedra gloriosa* and pay great attention to three particular words. In his description of the happiness of the Jews, engaged totally in spiritual life and the contemplation of the divine majesty, our rabbi lets slip at the heart of a long sentence: "... whilst the peoples will serve us ... (*sirviéndonos las gentes*)"<sup>36</sup>. Here the limits to all non-Jewish hopes are made clear. Happiness for all, peace and fraternity of men in the love of God by all means, but holy service remains the prerogative of the chosen people. Thus the theological and political standing of the non-Jew is mapped out: he has his place in the community of just men united by the coming of the Messiah. But what is the position of the non-Jew until that hoped for age? Menasseh ben Israel gives him a specific political role consequent upon that age: his conduct regarding Israel. That is why we must pause momentarily and examine the historical interpretation which our rabbi openly shares with both Jewish and non-Jewish readers in the *Piedra gloriosa*, where the status and responsibilities of nations are henceforth assigned without the least ambivalence. Now our rabbi can conduct his prize-giving in a straightforward manner in the light of the commentary on the Book of Daniel. The dream of Nabuchodonosor explained by the prophet had proved itself accurate on all points until the fourth kingdom. Menasseh does not miss the opportunity of associating Jerome, Sixtus of Sienna and Francisco Valles with this observation. The fourth kingdom itself will spawn ten empires, of which the most terrible is, according to the royal dream, an animal with ten horns, one of which is small, fearsome and predominating<sup>37</sup>. Who are then the good non-Jews who can expect divine favor? Which nations will God protect? That the United Dutch Provinces are among them goes without saying. But surprisingly enough, and contrary to the opinion of Don Isaac Abravanel, the small horn, the last

<sup>34</sup> *Piedra gloriosa*, op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1 and 2.

and most dangerous convulsion of evil, is not the Papacy but Mohammed and his followers<sup>38</sup>. This is a little astonishing, especially as we know of the welcome which Bajazet II, sultan of Constantinople, extended to the exiles of 1492, when he threatened all those who mistreated the immigrants with the death penalty<sup>39</sup>. In 1655, the situation of the Constantinople Jews was far from wretched. However, the capital was not the entire Empire. The fate of the Jews in the Holy Land was hardly an enviable one, and in 1625, in Jerusalem, they had undergone much suffering<sup>40</sup>. Moses Franco records that many Ashkenazic Jews were slaughtered in 1648 during rioting<sup>41</sup>. And we know that it was that very date which had been put forward by the *Zohar* for the coming of the Messiah. Menasseh ben Israel reaffirms that the Moslems mistreat the Jews, extract heavy tributes from those who live under their rule, and he names Asia, Egypt and Africa as the regions of their tribulations. He confirms this sad observation in his *Vindiciae judaeorum*, seeing as an exception those Jews who lived at the Sultan's court<sup>42</sup>. But was this enough to condemn the Moslems? It seems that our author was well enough informed but shared the prejudices of his age, and aligned himself with Spinoza in this instance – although he did not make an habit of this – in portraying the world of Islam as barbaric and Mahomed as an impostor<sup>43</sup>. On the other hand, Menasseh is an apologist for the House of Austria. Certainly not with regard to the Spanish branch, but rather to the monarchy of Vienna where the Jews enjoyed a relative indulgence, dearly purchased with gold. There is a curiously eulogizing note to our rabbi's praise, which ought to have been rather more discriminating. The same praise, this time more justified, is bestowed upon Venice and the Polish kings. The Duke of Tuscany wins Menasseh's full approval. Florence treated the Jews relatively well and our rabbi was no doubt aware of the emotional ties which linked the duchy to the Abarbanel family<sup>44</sup>. With regard to the Popes, he states that the Jews owe them a great debt because the Popes had sheltered them from "numerous calamities". We have to admit that persecutions and massacres had not taken place in Rome, and that Innocent X was favorable enough towards the Jews. And it should be pointed out that an apology for the papacy in a Calvinist environment demanded courage, and displays Menasseh's preference for the truth rather

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 221-222.

<sup>39</sup> M. Franco, *Essai sur l'histoire des Israélites de l'empire Ottoman* (Paris, 1897), p. 38.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>42</sup> *Piedra gloriosa*, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

<sup>43</sup> Spinoza, Letter to Jacob Osten no. XLIII.

<sup>44</sup> *Espérance d'Israël*, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

than for politics on this point, for it was the eve of his mission to England where the Pope was considered to be the Antichrist, the Beast.

Why this procession of righteous non-Jews? The answer is straight forward. Menasseh ben Israel was preparing for his mission to England, deferred until then because of the hostilities between the United Dutch Provinces and the country of Cromwell. Our rabbi knew that he would have to be convincing to overcome many prejudices, and the *Piedra gloriosa* in this respect prepared the ground because, as we have seen, the outcome of this work is to situate the non-Jews theologically and politically at the dawn of the messianic age. Menasseh certainly knew that the prophecy of Daniel held a crucial place in English thought (the book of this prophet answered all its hopes, to the extent that Newton would declare that to reject the prophecies of Daniel would be to reject Christianity itself)<sup>45</sup>. Edward Nicholas, author of the *Apology for the honourable nation of the Jews*<sup>46</sup>, argues that to respect and honor the Jews is first and foremost to love God and attract his benevolence. This reflection is born of the same spirit as that of the *Piedra gloriosa* which it predates, even though it is the book of a non-Jew. When Cromwell later decided to lend his support to Menasseh ben Israel's request, his target was not only the much-coveted economic prosperity of the United Dutch Provinces. The return of the Jews was a necessary step in the coming of the messianic age. They had to be scattered everywhere before they could find their original homeland and England might thus easily be the instrument of the restoration of the Jews necessary for the Parousia. Menasseh ben Israel knew that old prejudices die hard and that not everyone shared this vision. The *Vindiciae Judaearum* later aims to analyze all the anti-Jewish traditions and accusations intelligently and ingeniously. Not only does our rabbi demonstrate that he was familiar with anti-Jewish authors, but also that he could use them to exculpate his fellow-Jews from the charges usually levelled against them, in particular that of ritual murder<sup>47</sup>. He recalls, following non-Jewish authors, that the first Christians had also been charged with this outrage solely on the basis of hysteria. He also shows that the Jews, a people of priests, always prayed to God for the king and country which welcomed them. In the same work, the charge of idolatry is as easily refuted as that of proselytizing, which had been used by the Catholic kings of Spain in an endeavor to justify the banishment of 1492. Broaching the delicate problem of the commercial competition which might ensue with the arrival of the Jews in England, Me-

<sup>45</sup> P.G. Rogers, *The Fifth Monarchy Men* (London, 1966), p. 139.

<sup>46</sup> Edward Nicholas, *An Apology for the honorable nation of the Jews* (London, 1648).

<sup>47</sup> *Vindiciae Judaearum*, *op. cit.*, 1st count of indictment, 12°. Menasseh ben Israel quotes Hoornbeeck, an author who was anti-Jewish but refused nonetheless to believe in ritual murder.

nasseh points out that the craftsmen of the country would have everything to gain, for it was very rare for a Jew to practice a manual trade. And finally, the return of the Jews to England could be extremely beneficial to the country thanks to the diaspora which would provide all sorts of information as well as mercantile links. We have summarized here the strong points of Menasseh ben Israel's case in several lines, in order to show how he is equally at ease in a practical and pragmatic discourse as in the commentary on the Book of Daniel. But his artistry in the role of privileged interlocutor of the non-Jews was not merely confined to the sphere of diplomatic activity or the description of the spiritual status of non-Jews.

For it is in the field of theology that our rabbi shows his true worth. In all modesty moreover, he holds up his *Conciliador* as "a supreme work, an heroic undertaking"<sup>48</sup>. Authorial vanity no doubt, but based on truth all the same. In fact, Menasseh ben Israel aimed in this book to gather all the ostensible contradictions to which Scripture can give rise, and in the closing passage of the second part of this book, destined as we have seen for the Gentlemen of the East India Company, he emphasizes that his understanding refers to both Jews and Christians. With his usual skill and intelligence, he presents himself as an author whose reflections are useful for everyone: "The most celebrated men of past and present times have worked a great deal on such matters, matters in which there is no difference between Christian and Jew"<sup>49</sup>. Taken literally, the statement is accurate. All Christians and Jews wanted to assert the divine origin of Scripture and attempted to explain its apparent contradictions in the face of heterodoxy. This work of Menasseh ben Israel is not however universal in its consequences. Far from it. It is known that in his *De termino vitae* he answers a question from Beverovicus, which had been put to several eminent personalities and takes up its argument in the vernacular language for his fellow-Jews<sup>50</sup>. Pondering on the fundamental problem of free will tied to the salvation of the soul, he arrives at a conclusion in seven parts which is expounded at the close of the *De termino vitae*, and later in question XLIX of the second part of the *Conciliador*. The conclusions are the following:

" – first, without question, the life of man comes to an end.

– second: this end is consequent upon the complexion and temperament of the body or the attributes received from the conjunction of the stars at the moment of conception or birth. Others bring the Age of the present or past century into play.

<sup>48</sup> *Conciliador* . . . (second part), *op. cit.*, Epistola dedicatoria, unpaginated.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> J. Beverovicus, *Epistola quaestio de vitae termino fatali an mobili? Cum doctorum responsis* (Leiden, 1636).

- third: the term of life, however it is considered, cannot be fixed.
- fourth: life can be ended in several ways, that is by providence, nature or accident.
- fifth: the observance of the precepts has the power to prolong life, as does meditation on the divine Law. That is the theory and the practice.
- sixth: man may legally use medicines when he is ill.
- seventh: finally, whilst knowing that God knows from all eternity the length of the life of any person, it is given to man to improve his destiny through his own merits”<sup>51</sup>.

This time, the non-Jew has drawn Menasseh ben Israel into an area of doctrine of fundamental importance; it divides the Gomarists, supported by the House of Orange to whom our rabbi owed grateful homage, from the Arminians, who formed the party of Remonstrants along with all the liberal Protestants who accorded importance to the works of man in his salvation. Both theology and politics are at stake here given the context of the United Dutch Provinces. Menasseh ben Israel was conscious not only of this gravity, but also of the dangers. In an unedited letter which we have been lucky enough to publish, did he not explain himself in the following terms: “I notice that there are two or three men of not unnotable power who would do anything to have our race despised by the inhabitants of this country . . . These men even consider it a defect on the part of the Republic of Amsterdam to let my writings appear in latin . . .”<sup>52</sup> These lines are taken from a letter to Beverovicus about the publication of the *De termino vitae*. Our rabbi had taken up a position against the orthodox Calvinist party, and he knew that this work would be perceived as just such a theological choice. The problems of grace, predestination, free will are not specifically Jewish problems. In fact, Judaism acknowledged man’s absolute liberty, and it is on this liberty that man’s life and death partially depend, and his salvation of course which is directly linked to the choice offered by God in Deuteronomy: “For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, nor is it far off . . . See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil” (30, 11 and 15). Menasseh ben Israel is obliged to give precise answers to the questions which non-Jews asked obsessively, and which might trouble the souls of those Jews who were not yet sure in the faith they had barely rediscovered. The problem was so serious that in 1642 he would take up the theme in a short work called *De la fragilidad humana*<sup>53</sup>. The pressure from the non-Jewish world was evidently great, as was the desire for knowledge amongst those Jews who

<sup>51</sup> *De termino vitae* (Amsterdam, 1639), pp. 232-233.

<sup>52</sup> “Le problème du latin chez Menasseh ben Israël et quelques implications religieuses et politiques à propos d’une lettre inédite à Beverovicus”, *Studia Rosenthaliana*, XIV, no. 1 (1980), pp. 1-6.

<sup>53</sup> *De la fragilidad humana y inclinación del hombre al pecado* (Amsterdam, 1642).

had not been the beneficiaries of their ancestors' heritage. In this book, Menasseh attacks from the very first line a heresy with which even Saint Augustine had problems: Pelagianism. But in attacking Pelagianism, he incidentally refutes its antithesis in a manner completely consonant with the faith: that is he refutes Calvinism, drawing as always upon Jewish and non-Jewish authorities. Menasseh borrows with pride and equal facility the arguments which support his own thesis, both from the authors of classical antiquity and from the Church fathers. Truth is universal. For our author, the non-Jew may grasp it also, which is why he never rejects the interplay of a non-Jewish discourse with Jewish thought. A study of non-Jewish sources of Menasseh ben Israel remains to be written. He reflects upon the question of grace, a very noble question, he affirms, often touched upon by Greek and Latin authors, but "examined for the first time by someone of our own race and treated authoritatively"<sup>54</sup>. Thus he begins a work of Jewish theology from a reflection on the doctrine of a non-Jewish heretic. Let us outline Pelagius' doctrine. Man can, without the aid of grace, fulfill divine precepts. The English monk denies original sin its fatality. The children born of Adam do not contract the original stain, which explains why man has an equal possibility of choosing good or evil. Calvinism utterly rejects this view of man. From this point of view, man is at root the prisoner of original sin until the end of time; he is blind, depraved, incapable of choosing freely the ways which would lead to salvation. Only the free, secret and forever inexplicable grace of God saves a few elect, while the rest are damned for eternity. Even the works of the just can have no impact. "Human freedom is therefore stricken with paralysis". The vindication is an act which God alone can accomplish, he alone having the power to transfer the soul from a state of sin to a state of grace. Calvinism and Pelagianism are both inadmissible as regards Judaism, although it is closer to the Pelagian than the Calvinist position. Menasseh ben Israel knew that he could not refute in print the arguments of the author of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* which were the most anti-pathetic to his mind and his closest non-Jewish allies. So with noteworthy prudence, he takes Pelagius (an author rejected by all Christians) as his point of departure in order to reject Calvin and present to Jew and non-Jew alike the Jewish doctrine of salvation. Here he is to be admired both as a theologian and as a politician.

Divided into two parts, the *De la fragilidad humana* shows first of all that no man can hold out against sin, for the sin of Adam, even if it has not corrupted the human race at the core, has nevertheless weakened it. It is important to specify that Menasseh ben Israel envisages this weakness in

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, Al lector, unpaginated.

the form of an inclination towards passion as opposed to reason: "Eve conceived after having sinned, and her progeny are no longer conceived according to the dictates of reason"<sup>55</sup>. Therefore all men are sinners, he concedes that much to Calvinism, and even if man keeps the divine precepts in mind, his nature leads him to sin, whether by error or omission. It is therefore impossible for man not to sin, and our rabbi bases this statement not only on the teaching of the holy men of Israel but also on the Stoic analysis of virtue, which as we know, holds that virtues are completely inseparable from each other: one either possesses them all or none at all<sup>56</sup>. But this implicit appeal to the Stoics is not enough and our rabbi also calls on Thomas Aquinas, Saint Augustine and Cicero<sup>57</sup>. The progeny of Adam has not bettered itself, and it is with the aid of both Jewish and non-Jewish texts that our rabbi denounces and demonstrates the degradation of man. But the aim of the second part of the book is to bring important objections to bear on the first. And once again, it is Pelagius who provides the case-study. To follow him would be to abolish sin totally, and thus deny free will. But conversely a completely depraved human would deny the value of human actions and merits, the *mitsvot* and the *teshuva*, so many means by which Judaism expresses a freedom grounded in the Law: "If God, blessed may He be, condemns the transgressor of his precepts, so does He too absolve him through the means He gives him to repent and to do penitence"<sup>58</sup>. Grace, understood *more judaico*, is the aid (*el auxilio*). God grants it to the man who decides to choose good, to the just man, and thus multiplies the chances for doing *mitsvot*; but the original movement comes always from the free man, and Menasseh ben Israel concludes the treatise, very rapidly summarized here, with an exhortation to virtue which directly answers those who negate free will: "So that good and evil are within the grasp of the counsel of man just as life and death . . . let him who wishes to live in the tents of the Lord and share in his holy dwelling walk in the path of perfection, act with justice and speak the truth"<sup>59</sup>. The Jewish reply to the non-Jewish problem is perfectly clear and free from any ambiguity: it constitutes a rebuttal of Calvinism without polemic, by conducting the argument with one who was an enemy to all Christians. Let us acknowledge again the courage and prudence of our rabbi. We esteem them still more when we remember that for Calvinism, all the works of man performed outside the Christian faith, even the best, are sins.

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

Without concessions, and without acrimony, Menasseh ben Israel knew how to answer the questions of the non-Jewish world, to inform it of the theological and political status conferred on it by Scripture, to share with it the expectation of the Messiah – without even confounding its hopes with those of the Jews. At a crucial moment in European thought, at a time when Christianity was divided and torn into many competing and antagonistic sects, he presents Judaism as a religion which was of course “open”, but ever closed to confusion.



## MENASSEH BEN ISRAEL, HENRY MORE AND JOHANNES HOORNBEECK ON THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF THE SOUL\*

JAN VAN DEN BERG

In the thought of the leading Cambridge Platonist Henry More (1614-1687) as well as in that of two of his friends and admirers, George Rust (d. 1670) and Joseph Glanvill (1636-1680), the idea of the pre-existence of the soul took an important place. The same holds true for Menasseh ben Israel, who expounded his views on this point in several of his publications. When, between September 1655 and October 1657, Menasseh was in London, he discussed these views with the author of the "Annotations" on two tracts by Glanvill and Rust, which appeared in the second edition of the tracts in 1682<sup>1</sup>. There can be no doubt about the attribution of the "Annotations" to More: his biographer Richard Ward, who had known More personally and who was well informed, mentions "his excellent *Annotations on Lux Orientalis*" in the (unpublished) sequel to *The Life of the Learned and Pious Dr More* (1710)<sup>2</sup>. Speaking of the idea of pre-existence (the main topic of the two tracts) More wrote in the "Annotations":

"That this was the common opinion of the wiser men amongst the Jews, R. Menasse Ben Israel himself told me at London with great freedom and assurance,

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\* I thank Dr. Norma E. Emerton, Cambridge, for the correction of the English text.

<sup>1</sup> *Two choice and useful Treaties: the one Lux Orientalis or an Enquiry into the Opinion of the Eastern Sages concerning the Praeexistence of Souls. Being a Key to unlock the Grand Mysteries of Providence. In relation to Mans Sin and Misery. The other, a Discourse of Truth, by the Late Reverend Dr. Rust Lord Bishop of Dromore in Ireland. With Annotations on them both* (London, 1682). The first tract, by Glanvill, first appeared in 1662; the tract by Rust was first published in 1677.

<sup>2</sup> R. Ward, "Some Account of Dr More's Works", *Christ's College*, Cambridge, MS 20, f. 129 (quoted with the permission of the Master and Fellows of *Christ's College*, Cambridge); cf. *DNB* s.v. Glanvill and More. I thank Dr. Alan Gabbey, Belfast, for his kind assistance in this matter. In the More correspondence I have found one place where the "Annotations" are mentioned. More had drawn the attention of Henry Hallywell (who some years later edited Rust's *Remains*, see n. 41) to the "Annotations", as appears from Hallywell's letter to More of 14 May 1683: "... I thank you for giving me notice of the Annotations upon *Lux Orientalis*, the Author of which seems to be of a very gay, pleasant and airy temper, and as he sayes of himselfe a Person not unexercised in those speculations": *Christ's College*, Cambridge, MS 21, f. 33. Probably this sentence contains a hidden compliment to More, though of course it is also possible that Hallywell really was unaware of the identity of the author.

and that there was a constant tradition thereof; which he said in some sense was also true concerning the Trinity, but that more obscure. But this of Pre-existence is manifest up and down in the Writings of that very ancient and learned Jew *Philo Judaeus*, as also something toward a Trinity, if I remember right”<sup>3</sup>.

Apart from this passage, nothing is known about a possible personal contact between Menasseh and More – but from the “Annotations” we know that More, like his friend and fellow Platonist Ralph Cudworth<sup>4</sup>, met Menasseh during the latter’s stay in London. That at this meeting Menasseh and More discussed the idea of pre-existence in a spirit of mutual understanding is quite feasible, as they had a common interest in this matter, which resulted from partly similar motives.

Menasseh mentions the idea in passing in his *Conciliador* (1632), when in a passage on Gen. 1:26 (“and God said: let us make men”), he referred to a rabbinic opinion, to be found in *Bereshit Rabbah* (cap. 3)<sup>5</sup>, that God had consulted with the souls before uniting them with a body, because he did not want to join them with matter against their will. In this context he remarks that according to most of the Hebrews the souls had been created on the first day<sup>6</sup>.

Starting from this belief, Menasseh gives a broad exposition of the idea of pre-existence in his *De Creatione Problemata XXX* (1635)<sup>7</sup>. In his answer to the question (Probl. XV) whether the souls have been created in the beginning of the world or together with the body, he states again that according to all Hebrews the souls of men were created before the body. This opinion was also held by Hermes Trismegistos, Pythagoras, Plato and several others from the gentiles; Menasseh points out that it had certainly reached them from the Hebrews and that, apart from all other testimonies, it can very well be proved from some places of Holy Scripture.

The first text quoted by Menasseh is Deut. 29:14, 15, of which he gives the following translation: “Neque vobiscum solis ego pango foedus meum . . . sed cum eo qui adstat hic nobiscum hodie . . . et cum illo qui non est hic nobiscum hodie”. He adds a commentary of the “ancients”, a quotation from *Tanhuma*<sup>8</sup>: “All the souls which existed from Adam onward, and which will exist until the end of the world, all these were created in the six

<sup>3</sup> *Two choice and useful Treatises*, “Annotations”, p. 27.

<sup>4</sup> See: David S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England 1603-1655* (Oxford, 1982), p. 234.

<sup>5</sup> An old midrash on Genesis: *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 7, c. 399 ff.

<sup>6</sup> I used the Latin ed. of 1633, *Conciliator, sive De convenientia Locorum S. Scripturae, quae pugnare inter se videntur* . . . (Francofurti [?], 1633), p. 12.

<sup>7</sup> *De Creatione Problemata XXX* . . . (Amstelodami, 1635), pp. 61-68 (Probl. XV), 68-69 (Probl. XVI).

<sup>8</sup> A midrash on the Pentateuch: *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 15, c. 794 f.

days of creation, and they were all in the garden of Eden . . . Thus can be said: with him who is with us today, and with him who is not with us today". All the souls, says Menasseh, which at one time will come into the light, were present when God gave his law, and with all of them he entered into a covenant.

Another proof-text is Isaiah 57:16 – "animas ego feci", which God says in the past tense, "ad significandum omnes in principio mundi conditas fuisse". Furthermore, the words in which the vocation of Jeremiah is described – Jer. 1:5: "Antequam te formassem in ventre, indidi tibi sapientiam" – lead Menasseh to a long exposition in which he avers that virtue, wisdom, knowledge, holiness and heavenly warmth had been given to the soul of the prophet before his body was formed in his mother's womb. In this context, he refers to the opinion of the Kabbalists and to Plato's doctrine of anamnesis. The passage ends with a sentence which has a true Platonic ring: "From these words can also be confirmed, it seems, the opinion of those who hold that the soul is the totality of man ('hominis totum') and the body only an instrument which is subservient to the soul". Other texts which Menasseh adduces as proofs of the pre-existence of souls are Eccl. 4:2, 3 (how can those who have not yet been born be praised above the living if they do not exist?) and Job 38:21 (" . . . noveris te iam tunc natum fuisse": "tunc" or "tum" refers to the "principium mundi").

After the appeal to Holy Scripture, Menasseh turns to Jewish tradition. He devotes much attention to the morning prayer of the great synagogue in the times of Ezra: "Mi Deus, anima quam mihi dedisti, munda est, illam tu creasti, formasti, eamque mihi inspirasti, nec non servas eam in me, hanc accepturus es cum ex me evolaverit". He points out that the soul is pure, which means that it is a "substantia subtilis et spiritualis", formed from "pura et munda materia"; a "corpus spirituale, natura caelesti prae-ditum". Plato thinks of this body, when he calls it a heavenly vehicle, while the Kabbalists teach that in this body the soul enjoys in paradise the reward of its works, or conversely is punished in hell. At the end of this exposition, he quotes Rabbi Johanan, who says in *Midrash ha-Ne'lam*<sup>9</sup> that there are two seats and domiciles of the soul: one of those souls who have not yet descended into the world, the other of those who have left this world and have returned to their source and origin. Menasseh concludes by remarking that because after the six days of creation God makes nothing "ex nihilo", but "aliud ex alio", all souls have been created at the beginning of the world, all together and all at one moment. Thus it is most certain

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<sup>9</sup> A Kabbalistic midrash, the earliest part of the *Zohar*: *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 10, c. 533; 16, c. 1196 f.

that the idea of pre-existence is not only Scriptural, but also reasonable: "hoc ita esse . . . etiam ex ratione certissimum est".

In Problema XVI Menasseh answers the question on which day the souls of men were created. He states that without any doubt they were created on the first day, together with light. This provides him with the occasion to expatiate on the Kabbalistic doctrine of the ten superior lights or "sephirot". The souls are the third light: so they precede the fourth light, the angels, and the fifth light, the light which lightened the earth during the first three days of creation. Menasseh realizes that according to at least one authority, Rabbi Eleazar (*Bereshit Rabbah*, VII), the soul of Adam was created on the sixth day, but he brushes this aside by remarking that Eleazar did not speak about the soul as such, but about the "anima vitalis".

While in *De Creatione* Menasseh dealt with the idea of pre-existence as if it were an abstract problem, in a work which appeared only a short time afterwards, *De Resurrectione Mortuorum*, the same idea was used by Menasseh as a strong argument in his defense of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. As the subtitle indicates, the work was directed against the "Saducees", who denied the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body<sup>10</sup>. No doubt the word "Sadducees" primarily refers to Uriel da Costa (±1585-1640), though Menasseh does not mention him explicitly. Because of his denial of the immortality of the soul, da Costa had been attacked by Samuel da Silva in his *Tratado da Immortalidade* (1623). The conflict between Uriel da Costa and the Amsterdam Jewish community had revived in the period after 1633, in which da Costa became the target of heavy attacks from the side of the synagogue<sup>11</sup>. Against the background of this conflict, Menasseh wrote his work on the resurrection.

To Menasseh, in this context the idea of the pre-existence of the soul was of supreme importance: once it has been ascertained that the souls were happy and blessed in a glorious state before being united with a body, it is clear that they can exist without a body, and that thus they can return to the same blessed state after the body has died<sup>12</sup>. This is the reason why in this work again he devotes so much attention to the many questions with regard to the human soul. The greatness of the soul as a spiritual substance of divine origin is taught by the ancient philosophers, among them Zoro-

<sup>10</sup> *De Resurrectione Mortuorum Libri III. Quibus animae immortalitas et corporis resurrectio contra Zaducaeos comprobatur; caussae item miraculosae resurrectionis exponuntur: deque judicio extremo, et mundi instauratione agitur: Ex Sacris Literis, et veteribus Rabinis* (Amstelodami, 1636).

<sup>11</sup> For this, see C. Gebhardt, *Die Schriften des Uriel da Costa* (Amsterdam-Heidelberg-London, 1922), esp. pp. XXIX ff. and 188, n. 279 (where Gebhardt remarks that Menasseh recapitulates the arguments of da Costa); furthermore C. Roth, *A Life of Menasseh ben Israel - Rabbi, Printer, and Diplomat* (Philadelphia, 1934), p. 71.

<sup>12</sup> *De Res.*, pp. 221 ff.

aster, Hermes, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Porphyrius “atque divinus Plato”. And although, says Menasseh, it is certain that we cannot know what is the nature of this substance, the opinion of Heraclitus seems to be probable, who stated that the soul was light; according to the ancients, the creation of the soul was contained in the creation of light on the first day<sup>13</sup>.

The soul as “*anima rationalis*” is infused into the children who are in the mother’s womb. In this connection, Menasseh mentions the old story (*Bereshit Rabbah* XXIV), according to which there burns a candle above the head of the unborn children, but as soon as the child has been born, an angel extinguishes the light. He sees as the meaning of this story, that before birth the souls of men are very wise, and provided with knowledge of all things, but they are deprived of this knowledge when they are brought into a body. Still, their knowledge is not lost; here, Menasseh ben Israel makes a comparison with those who because of a perturbation of their brains have become phrenetic: when they recover their knowledge, it is nothing else but the memory of that which they have known. “*Quae Platonis sententia quoque fuit, plane contraria opinioni Aristotelis*”<sup>14</sup>.

The doctrine of the pre-existence of souls was part and parcel of the Platonist-Pythagorean tradition, though it was not adopted by the Renaissance Platonists any more than the related doctrine of “metempsychosis”. In the context of his exposition of the idea of pre-existence, Menasseh ben Israel refers more than once to the “ancient philosophers”, among whom of course Plato holds pride of place. This does not detract from his conviction that the idea of pre-existence is essentially of Hebrew origin. The authorities he directly quotes are all Jewish: Biblical texts, the Jewish morning prayer, some of the older midrashim, such as *Tanhuma* and *Bereshit Rabbah*, and also Kabbalistic writings such as *Midrash ha-Ne’lam*. His main thesis – that of the formation of all human souls on the first day of creation – is traditionally Jewish, but it is colored by his dependence on the Kabbalistic world of thought. Here, we are reminded of the idea, mentioned before, that the soul is one of the ten supreme lights, “*quas Cabalistic vocant sephirot*”; furthermore I mention the notion of the paired creation of the male and the female soul and that of the transmigration of souls, in which he follows “*magnus et insignis Cabalista R. Isaak Luriensis*”. Lastly: while in *De Creatione* he dealt with the idea of pre-existence without an explicit purpose, in *De Resurrectione*, as we saw, the same idea received a special function in his struggle against the “Sadducees” of his own days.

In his conversation with Menasseh on this subject Henry More, we may

<sup>13</sup> *De Res.*, pp. 52 ff.

<sup>14</sup> *De Res.*, pp. 174 ff.

assume, will have recognized in the Amsterdam rabbi a kindred spirit, who shared his interest in a problem which lay outside the horizon of most of his fellow philosophers and theologians in England. More's first utterances on the idea of the pre-existence of the human soul are to be found in a number of poems which he wrote as a young man deeply committed to the Neo-Platonist world of thought. When, almost forty years later, he looked back upon that period, he spoke with a somewhat critical undertone about "that so ardent desire of Philosophizing, which seized me when I was very young"<sup>15</sup>. In the first poem of the series, *Psychozoia or the life of the Soul* (1642), written in 'rhythmes which from Platonic rage do powerfully flow forth'<sup>16</sup>, More paid homage to the "ancient philosophers" in the following words:

"So if what's consonant to Plato's school  
(Which well agrees with learned Pythagore,  
Egyptian Trismegist, and th'antique roll  
Of Chaldee wisdom, all which time hath tore  
But Plato and deep Plotin do restore)  
Which is my scope, I sing out lustily:  
If any twitten me for such strange lore,  
And me all blamelesse brand with infamy,  
God purge that man from fault of foul malignity"<sup>17</sup>.

*Psychozoia* is an eloquent testimony of More's belief in "the Souls excellence . . . her radiant life and lovely hue"<sup>18</sup>, which, of course, implies the belief in its immortality:

"But souls that of his [God's] own good life partake  
He loves as his own self; dear as his eye  
they are to him: He'll never them forsake;  
When they shall dye, then God himself shall die . . ."<sup>19</sup>

The idea of pre-existence is implicitly present throughout the poem<sup>20</sup>,

<sup>15</sup> From the autobiographical preface of his theological works (first ed. 1679): *The Theological Works of the Most Pious and Learned Henry More* . . . (London, 1708), p. I.

<sup>16</sup> *Psychozoia* Cant. I, 2: *The Complete Poems of Dr. Henry More* . . . ed. by A.B. Grosart (New York, 1967; first published 1878), p. 13; *Philosophical Poems of Henry More*, ed. by G. Bullough (Manchester, 1931), p. 11.

<sup>17</sup> Cant. I, 4: *loc. cit.*; *Phil. Poems*, p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> Cant. I, 12: *Compl. Poems*, p. 14; *Phil. Poems*, p. 15.

<sup>19</sup> Cant. II, 19: *Compl. Poems*, p. 21; *Phil. Poems*, p. 38.

<sup>20</sup> For the presence of the idea of pre-existence in the world of thought of More's authorities at that time, the "ancient philosophers", see: D.P. Walker, *The Ancient Theology* (Ithaca, New York, 1972), pp. 6, 10. One may wonder whether in this poem More reacts against Sir John Davies' "creationist" poem *Nosce Teipsum* (1599), where we read:

"Then neither from eternity before,  
Nor from the time when Time's first point begun,  
Made He all souls, which now He keeps in store . . .  
But as God's handmaid, Nature, doth create,

but the term as such does not yet occur. It is used for the first time in a second poem, *Psychathanasia or The Immortality of the Soul*, which appeared together with *Psychozoia*; there, More speaks of "the souls preexistence, before into this outward world she glides"<sup>21</sup>. The subject became the special theme of a poem which appeared in the 1647 edition of the "Philosophicall Poems: *The Praeexistency of the Soul*, in which the idea of pre-existence functions as an extra argument for the belief in "the Souls future subsistency after death". From the beginning to the end, the poem is couched in Neo-Platonic language. Plotinus is More's guide:

"For I would sing the Praeexistency  
Of humane souls, and live once ore again  
By recollection and quick memory  
All what is past since first we all began.  
But all too shallow be my wits to scan  
So deep a point and mind too dull to clear  
So dark a matter: but Thou, O more than man!  
Aread thou sacred Soul of *Plotin* deare  
Tell what we mortalls are, tell what of old we were"<sup>22</sup>.

From "The Preface to the Reader" it appears that More was aware of the "heavie prejudice" with regard to "the opinion of the Praeexistency of the Soul"; because of this, he remarked, "That which I have taken the pains and boldnesse to present to the free judgment of others, hath been already judged of old, very sound and orthodox, by the wisest and most learned of preceding ages. Which *R. Menasseh Ben-Israel*, doth abundantly attest in his 15. *Problem. De Creatione*; avouching that it is the common Opinion of all the Hebrews, and that it was never called into controversie, but approved of, by the common consent and suffrage of all wise men". But though More agreed with the rabbi's appeal to the Old Testament, he added that Menasseh "might . . . have been more fitly furnished, could his Religion have reached into the New". As "proof-texts" from the New Testament, More mentioned Phil. 2:6, 7, 8; John 9:1, 2, 3; John 17:4, 5 and Mark 8:27, 28: "all those places do seem so naturally to favour this Probability, that if it had pleased the Church to have concluded it for a standing Truth; He that would not have been fully convinced upon the evidence of these passages of Scripture, would undoubtedly, have been held a man of

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Bodies in time distinct and order due,  
So God gives souls the like successive date,  
Which Himself makes, in bodies formed new . . .".

See: G. Bullett, ed., *Silver Poems of the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1941), pp. 362 f. I thank this reference to Dr. N.E. Emerton.

<sup>21</sup> Book III, Cant. 22, 1, cf. 4: *Compl. Poems*, p. 70 (not in *Phil. Poems*).

<sup>22</sup> St. 2, *Compl. Poems*, p. 119.

a very timorous and Scepticall constitution, if not something worse”<sup>23</sup>. It is interesting to note that (apart from John 9:1, 2, 3) within the context of More’s metaphysical way of thinking these texts could be used as “proofs” for the pre-existence of the soul of Jesus, but not, or at least not directly, for that of the human soul in general; apparently, for More the probability of the one implied that of the other.

One other point should be noted. While Menasseh did not contrast the idea of emanation (which he used in connection with the “Sephirirot”) with that of the creation of the souls on the first day, More (loyal to his “guide” Plotinus) explicitly uses the term “emanation” with rejection of the term “creation”:

“Wherefore man’s soul’s not by Creation,  
Nor is it generate, as I proved before.  
Wherefore let’t be by emanation  
(If fully it did not praeexist of yore)  
By flowing forth from that eternall store  
Of Lives and souls ycleep’d [named] the World of life,  
Which was, and shall endure for evermore”<sup>24</sup>.

In 1653, More published his *Conjectura Cabbalistica*<sup>25</sup>, which (otherwise than the title might make us surmise) is not a Kabbalistic work in the strict sense of the word. At this stage of his development More’s knowledge of the Kabbalah was slight and indirect<sup>26</sup>, and indeed in the *Conjectura Cabbalistica* he laid no claim of being at home in the field of Jewish Kabbalist thought. From the “Preface to the reader” it becomes clear that More used the word “Cabbala” to denote a certain method of explaining the Scriptures, *in casu* the Book of Genesis. His “Cabbala” is not identical with, but analogous to the “Jewish Cabbala”. In accordance with what he took for the Jewish method, he tried to combine a more literal exegesis

<sup>23</sup> *Compl. Poems*, p. 118.

<sup>24</sup> St. 95, *Compl. Poems*, p. 128. Menasseh speaks of “emanationes” in *De Creat.*, pp. 105 f.: “... dicimus illas Scephirirot ... esse ... tantum emanationes quasdam essentiae conjunctas, perinde uti radii solares cum sole ...”.

<sup>25</sup> *Conjectura Cabbalistica*, or a Conjectural Essay of Interpreting the mind of Moses, in the Three first Chapters of Genesis, according to a Threefold Cabbala: Viz. Literal, Philosophical, Mystical, or Divinely Moral; reprinted (in the 1662 ed.) in: H. More, *A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings*, II (New York and London, 1978).

<sup>26</sup> For More and the Kabbalah, see R.J. Zwi Werblowsky, “Milton and the *Conjectura Cabbalistica*”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XVIII (1955), esp. p. 22, and A. Coudert, “A Cambridge Platonist’s Kabbalist Nightmare”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XXXVI (1975), esp. p. 646; also W. Schulze, “Der Einfluss der Kabbala auf die Cambridge Platoniker Cudworth und More”, *Judaica*, XXIII (1965), pp. 75-126, 193-240. Schulze, however, does not distinguish as clearly as Allison Coudert does between More’s knowledge of the Kabbalah before and after he came into contact with F.M. van Helmont and C. Knorr von Rosenroth.



with an interpretation of the more “mysterious” or “mystical” meaning of the text<sup>27</sup>.

In *The Defence of the Threefold Cabbala*, an apology for the “Cabbalistic” method which was published together with the *Conjectura*, More mentions the names of many authorities, Christian as well as pagan. With regard to the latter, he says in the preface: “As for citing the *Heathen Writers* so frequently; you are to consider that they are the Wisest and the most Virtuous of them, and either such as the Fathers say had their philosophy from *Moses* and the Prophets, as *Pythagoras* and *Plato*, or else the Disciples or Friends of these Philosophers”. Next to them and the “Fathers”, More also mentions (which he declares to conceive as valid in this case) “the *Jewish Rabbins*, who, in things where prejudice need not blinde them, I should think as fit as any to confirm a *Cabbalistical* sense, especially if there be a general consent of them, and that they do not write their private fancy, but the minde of their whole Church”<sup>28</sup>. One of them is Menasseh ben Israel, whom again he quotes in support of the idea of pre-existence. That the souls of men were from the beginning of the world, “is the general opinion of the Learned Jews, as well as of the *Pythagoreans* and *Platonists* . . .”<sup>29</sup>. Adam was “created amongst the *Angelical Orders* part of the First Day’s Creation, when God made *Heaven* or *Light*”. This “appears from what *Menasseh Ben Israel* cites out of *Gemara Haguigae*: In caelo Empyreo esse domicilia vitae, et pacis, et animarum justorum et Spiritum, atque etiam animarum istarum quae in Mundum venturae sunt”. Furthermore, it is confirmed by *Bereshit Rabbah*, on the strength of which Menasseh says “that the wise men of his Nation interpret that of the Psalms, *Post et ante me formasti* Ps. 139.4, of the creating *Adam*, that is, mankind, *first* in the *First* day, and *after* in the *Sixth*”<sup>30</sup>. It is to be noted that here (unlike what he wrote in the earlier poem on pre-existence) More does not speak of emanation, but (in accordance with Menasseh) of the creation of the soul.

Shortly after More’s meeting with Menasseh, in 1659, appeared his *The Immortality of the Soul*; a subject which, as we saw, had been dealt with at great length by Menasseh in his *De Resurrectione Mortuorum*. The two works differ in scope and character. Though with Menasseh philosophical arguments are not quite absent, they are brought forward within the context of traditional Jewish theology; More’s work, on the contrary, has a predominantly philosophical character. And while Menasseh mainly deals with the immortality of the soul as such, More’s defense of the immortal-

<sup>27</sup> *Conjectura*, p. 1.

<sup>28</sup> *Defence* (1662 ed., repr. 1978), pp. 43 f. (continuous pagination with *Conjectura*).

<sup>29</sup> *Defence*, p. 87.

<sup>30</sup> *Defence*, p. 147.

ity of the soul is indissolubly connected with his belief in the existence of a world of spirits and demons. How crucial this belief was to his thinking, appears from the closing lines of his *An Antidote against Atheisme* (1652): "For assuredly that Saying is not more true in Politicks, *No Bishop, no King*, than this is in Metaphysics, *No Spirit, no God*"<sup>31</sup>. Moreover, there is no indication whatever that More had taken cognizance of Menasseh's work on the subject.

Still, there are some parallels between both works. Menasseh had written his work as an attack against the "Sadducees" of his own days, whom he saw represented in Uriel da Costa; in similar vein, More opposed the "materialists", whose main representative at that time was Hobbes. In his *The Immortality of the Soul* he did not yet dub them "Sadducees" – his language with regard to Hobbes is rather restrained<sup>32</sup> – but that ultimately More and his friends saw the "materialists" as "Sadducees" appears already from the title of Joseph Glanvill's work *Saducismus Triumphatus: Or, A full and plain evidence concerning Witches and Apparitions* (1681)<sup>33</sup>. In a letter to Glanvill, written in 1678 and included in *Saducismus*, More spoke of "such coarse grain'd Philosophers as those *Hobbians* and *Spinozians*, and the rest of that Rabble", who "slight Religion and the Scriptures, because there is such express Mention of Spirits and Angels in them, things that their dull Souls are so inclinable to conceit to be impossible . . ."<sup>34</sup>.

Furthermore, in his *The Immortality of the Soul* More sees, again in accordance with Menasseh's views, a direct connection between the doctrine of the soul's immortality and the belief in pre-existence; a belief which "has been received by the most learned Philosophers of all Ages, there being scarce any of them that held the Soul of man *Immortal* upon the mere light of Nature and reason, but asserted also her *Praeexistence* . . .". To the many testimonies of the ancient world "you may adde the abstruse Philosophy of the Jews, which they call their *Cabbala*, of which the *Soul's Praeexistence* makes a considerable part, as all the learned of the Jews do confess"<sup>35</sup>.

In 1660 appeared More's most important theological work: *An Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness*, a work which marks the fact that somehow in his thinking the center of gravity had shifted from philosophical

<sup>31</sup> *Antidote* (ed. 1662, repr. in *A Collection* . . . , I), p. 142.

<sup>32</sup> For this, see J. Tulloch, *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century*, II (Edinburgh and London<sup>2</sup>, 1874), pp. 364 ff.

<sup>33</sup> The work, full of ghost stories, is a new ed. of *A Blow at modern Sadducism* (1668), which in its turn is a new ed. of *Philosophical Considerations concerning Witches and Witchcraft* (1666). It contains a letter from More to Glanvill (1678) and a translation from More's *Enchiridion Metaphysicum* (1671); see DNB, s.v. Glanvill, and J.J. Cope, *Joseph Glanvill, Anglican Apologist* (St. Louis, 1956), pp. 91-103.

<sup>34</sup> *Saducismus* (London<sup>4</sup>, 1726), "Dr. More's Letter", p. 9.

<sup>35</sup> *The Immortality of the Soul* (ed. 1662, repr. in *A Collection* . . . , II), pp. 111, 113.

speculation to a more theological approach<sup>36</sup>. In this work, the idea of pre-existence functions within the context of More's attack on the doctrines of the "Psychopannychites", who taught that the soul "sleeps" from the moment of man's death till that of his bodily resurrection<sup>37</sup>. The background of More's objections against "this sinister conceit" is clear: it makes the active life of the soul dependent on that of the body and thus in fact denies the primacy of the soul, a notion fundamental to Platonic thinking. In his opposition, More links the idea of "the souls living and subsisting after Death" with that of her pre-existence. He deplores the fact that "the ancient Fathers", in spite of their being so conversant with Plato's writings, had omitted the idea of pre-existence, probably because of its supposed "Uncompliableness with Scripture"; it would not have been difficult for them to make their cause plausible out of Scripture itself. "The Jews would have contributed something out of the Old Testament". Here More turns again to the arguments brought forward by Menasseh ben Israel in his *De Creatione* (though here he does not mention its title); this time without the just slightly superior tone he assumed in the preface to his poem on pre-existence. As a complement to the proof-texts from the Old Testament, More mentions (as he did before) a number of texts from the New Testament, now with a broad exposition of his belief in the pre-existence of "the Soul of the Messiah". In passing we note that he remarks in his exposition of 1 John 4:2: "Here St. John seems to cabbalize, as in several places of the Apocalypse, that is, to speak in the language of the Learned of the Jews . . ."<sup>38</sup>.

In the year after the appearance of More's *An Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness*, in June 1661, an anonymous work was published under the title: *A Letter of Resolution concerning Origen and the chief of his Opinions*<sup>39</sup>. On 14 September More wrote to his friend Lady Conway: "I can not imagine who should be the Author of it, it is a pretty odd Book, but has some things very considerable in it . . ."<sup>40</sup>. The work is attributed to one of More's

<sup>36</sup> See F.J. Powicke, *The Cambridge Platonists* (Hamden, Connecticut, 1971; repr. of 1926 ed.), p. 157.

<sup>37</sup> In the period of the Reformation, the doctrine of the sleep of the soul was held within the Anabaptist circle, and attacked by Calvin in one of his earliest publications, the *Psychopannychia* of 1534. More referred to Calvin, "that solid interpreter of Scripture", but his way of arguing is totally different from that of the Genevan reformer; it is certainly an understatement when More in this context speaks of some "slight" differences between him and Calvin: *Grand Mystery*, in *The Theological Works* (London, 1708), p. 17.

<sup>38</sup> *Grand Mystery*, pp. 15 ff.; More had mentioned in passing the idea of the pre-existence of the soul of the Messiah as "the opinion of the Jewes" in his *Conjectura Cabbalistica*, p. 95.

<sup>39</sup> It appeared in London, and was reprinted in *The Phenix*, I (1707); again in *A Collection of Choice, scarce and valuable tracts* (1727); lastly in a reprint with a biographical note by Marjorie Hope Nicolson (New York, 1933).

<sup>40</sup> Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Conway Letters. The Correspondence of Anne, Viscountess Conway, Henry More, and their Friends, 1642-1684* (London, 1930), p. 192 (Letter 118).

Cambridge friends and pupils, George Rust, who in May 1661 had been made Dean of Connor; in 1667 he was consecrated Bishop of Dromore<sup>41</sup>. From this pamphlet, it appears how much the author admired Origen, whom he even calls "the *Holy Father*". The doctrine of the soul receives much attention: "... you will finde many things concerning the Nature of the Soul and her Operations, her *Union* with Matter, with many other speculations, not prov'd by me, but supposed, because they are fully and excellently discussed in the Writings of that learned Gentleman Mr *More of Cambridge* . . ." <sup>42</sup>. The author is firmly convinced of the truth of the idea of pre-existence, which he defends throughout his work, and which in accordance with More he connects with the doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul of Christ. But he differs from More in this, that apart from a few scattered utterances<sup>43</sup> there are no references to Jewish opinion on this point.

From another letter More wrote to Lady Conway it appears that in Cambridge the book (which, according to More, had "witt and learning") was considered dangerous. The Vice-Chancellor had censured it, "and one of the unsound opinions of Origen was the Praeexistence of the soule, which was conceived to be repugnant with the incarnation of Christ. A flaw in the opinion that the shortsighted Rabbins could not spy out who were in more speciall manner earnest for the pre[ex]istence of the soule of the Messias above all other soules, and yet their expectation was that he should come in the flesh . . ." <sup>44</sup>.

Another defense of the idea of the pre-existence of the soul was published in 1662 under the significant title *Lux Orientalis*<sup>45</sup>. It was written by a friend of More and Rust, the Anglican clergyman Joseph Glanvill, whom we met before as the author of *Saducismus Triumphatus*. No doubt the

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<sup>41</sup> *DNB*, s.v. Rust. Marjorie Nicolson takes Rust's authorship for granted, but J.I. Cope (*Joseph Glanvill*, p. 10, n. 32) rightly remarks: "The evidence of authorship is not complete. More never knew it, if Rust wrote the book (*Conway Letters*, p. 173), and Glanvill . . . does not mention it among Rust's works in the manuscript *Bensalem*". See also Charles F. Mullett, "A Letter by Joseph Glanvill on the Future State", *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, I (1937-1938), pp. 447-456, who with regard to the question of the authorship does not come further than a "perhaps". If Glanvill's letter of 20 Jan. 1661/62, published by Mullett, was indeed directed to Rust, then it is certain that Rust was an adherent of the doctrine of pre-existence. At any rate, Rust was a Platonist with much interest in "Cabbalistical or Traditional Learning", known for his "Reading and Skill in the Jewish Writers", as Henry Halliwell writes in the "Preface to the Reader" in: *The Remains of that Reverend and Learned Prelate, Dr. George Rust* . . . (London, 1686).

<sup>42</sup> *Letter* (ed. 1933), p. 22.

<sup>43</sup> *E.g.*, on p. 41: "... the opinion of Praeexistence, but in a special manner of the Soul of the *Messiah*, was the common doctrine of their Nation . . .".

<sup>44</sup> *Conway Letters*, p. 194 (Letter 119, 26 Oct. 1661).

<sup>45</sup> *Lux Orientalis, or an Enquiry into the Opinion of the Eastern Sages, Concerning the Praeexistence of Souls* . . . (London, 1662). For this work, see J.I. Cope, *Joseph Glanvill*, pp. 11, 87 ff.

author reflected upon the way the doctrine of pre-existence as formulated in *A Letter of Resolution* had been censured in Cambridge, when he wrote: "As for the opinion of Praeexistence, the subject of the following Papers, it was never determined against by ours, nor any other Church that I know of; And therefore I conceive is left as a matter of *School Speculation*, which without danger may be *problematically* argued on either hand. And I have so great confidence in all true Sons of our common Mother to think, that they will not fix any harsh and severe censures, upon the innocent *Speculations* of those, though possibly they may be Errours, who own the *Authority, Articles, Canons, and Constitutions* of that Church which they are so deservedly zealous for"<sup>46</sup> He realized that the subject had already been dealt with by "the learned D. *More*" (though not in a special treatise)<sup>47</sup> and by the author of "the Account of *Origen*". But because the latter had confined himself to Origen and his opponents (and thus perhaps in the eyes of Glanvill had made himself more vulnerable to criticism), Glanvill remarked that the author had "not so fully stated and cleared the businesse, but that there was room for after-undertakers". Glanvill pays scarcely more attention to Jewish opinion than the author of *A Letter of Resolution* had done. He remarks that one of "the great Rabbins . . . Mr. *Ben Israel* in his *Problems de Creatione*, assures us, that *Prae-existence* was the *common belief* of all *wise men* among the *Jews*, without exception". Furthermore, he quotes the "Book of Wisdom", the author of which "certainly was a *Jew*, probably *Philo*". All this, however, only functions as "a *by-consideration*"<sup>48</sup>. In this, he differed from More, who attached so much weight to the testimony of Menasseh.

Through Franciscus Mercurius van Helmont, whom he first met in 1670, More came into contact with Van Helmont's Kabbalistic studies and with those of Christian Knorr von Rosenroth<sup>49</sup>. Furthermore, in a letter to Lady Conway of 5 February 1671/72 he speaks about a Jew who told him about Isaac Luria, whom they held "to be the most knowing man of their cabbala of the Jews"<sup>50</sup>. More was interested, but also critical, as appears from his *Fundamenta Philosophiae sive Cabbalae Aeto-Paedo-Melissaeae*, in which, says A. Coudert, he expressed his feelings "eloquently and some-

<sup>46</sup> *Lux Orientalis*, "The Preface", f. A [8 RO, VO], B 2 RO.

<sup>47</sup> Perhaps the fact that More's utterances on this point were scattered through his works, combined with the fame and spiritual authority More enjoyed inside and outside Cambridge, explains why the Vice-Chancellor did not censure More's views on pre-existence.

<sup>48</sup> *Lux Orientalis*, p. 52.

<sup>49</sup> For this and what follows, see A. Coudert, "A Cambridge Platonist's Kabbalist Nightmare" (quoted above, n. 26).

<sup>50</sup> *Conway Letters*, p. 352 (Letter 218).

what heatedly’’<sup>51</sup>. It found a place in Knorr’s *Kabbala Denudata* (1677). In *Fundamenta* the doctrine of the pre-existence of souls is mentioned in a short passage, in which More tries to guard his cherished doctrine against disfigurement and pollution by a Kabbalist hypothesis, according to which the souls originated from the material word<sup>52</sup>. From his ‘‘Annotations’’ to the 1682 edition of Glanvill’s *Lux Orientalis* and Rust’s *A Discourse of Truth*<sup>53</sup> it becomes clear that More remained loyal to his essentially Platonic doctrine of pre-existence. What strikes us in the author’s account of his conversation with Menasseh ben Israel, then already a quarter of a century ago, is the fact that here the only witness for the doctrine of pre-existence who is mentioned by name is ‘‘that very ancient and learned Jew Philo Judaeus’’. In the context of the doctrine of pre-existence, Menasseh neither mentions him in his *De Creatione* nor in his *De Resurrectione*, while More only mentions him in passing (in a long list of philosophers) in his *The Immortality of the Soul*<sup>54</sup>. Assuming that the sentence in the ‘‘Annotations’’ in which Philo is mentioned refers to the conversation in question, we may ask whether it was a case of ‘‘fausse reconnaissance’’ on the side of More (cf. the ‘‘if I remember right’’) or whether he and the Amsterdam rabbi really discussed Philo when they had their meeting in London.

For some people, the idea of the pre-existence of souls was more than an abstract speculation. In a letter of 13 October 1683 Edmund Elys, an Anglican clergyman with mystical sympathies<sup>55</sup>, wrote to More after the decease of Elys’ wife: ‘‘That *Hypothesis* of *Praeexistence* would be Probable unto me if I had no other Grounds for it but my Reflexion upon the *Strange Sympathy* that was Betwixt us notwithstanding our *Differences* in *Sex*, *Education*, *Bodily Temper* and which sometimes broke out in such words, at which our Enemies took advantage’’<sup>56</sup>. In fact, Elys went even further than More dared to go: apparently he believed in the paired creation of souls, a doctrine which Menasseh taught but which we do not find with More. That in certain circles the doctrine of pre-existence enjoyed a rather large measure of popularity appears from the publisher’s address in *Two choice and useful Treatises*; according to the publisher, ‘‘when the book *Lux Orientalis* grew scarce it was so much valued by the more eager and curious searchers into the profoundest points of philosophy, that there was given for it some four or five times the price for which it was first sold’’<sup>57</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> ‘‘A Cambridge Platonist’s Kabbalist Nightmare’’, p. 648.

<sup>52</sup> C. Knorr von Rosenroth, *Kabbala Denudata*, I 2 (Sulzbaci, 1677; repr. Hildesheim-New York, 1974), p. 297.

<sup>53</sup> Full title in note 1.

<sup>54</sup> *Immortality*, p. 114.

<sup>55</sup> See: *DNB*, s.v. Elys; *Conway Letters*, p. 301, n. 2.

<sup>56</sup> *Christ’s College*, Cambridge, MS 21, f. 36A.

<sup>57</sup> See: F. Greenslet, *Joseph Glanvill* (New York, 1900), pp. 60 f.

Not all, however, valued the idea of the pre-existence of the human soul as highly as the Platonists did. Outside the Platonist circle, most Christian theologians considered the doctrine of pre-existence strange and even unorthodox. Glanvill, who revered the moderate Calvinist Richard Baxter – “I affect you no less ardently, than if you were a Metropolitan” – apparently had some misgivings, when he sent his *Lux Orientalis* to Baxter: “’Tis very likely that you will wonder at this exploit; And bee yet more surprised when I have told you, that I am the Author . . .”<sup>58</sup>. Baxter indeed could not appreciate Glanvill’s work, as appears from another letter Glanvill sent to him: “Your disapproval of Praeexistence is one of the greatest arguments yett seen against it”. Over against Baxter, Glanvill maintained his point of view, though with caution and reserve: “I owe myself an Assertor of the probability of this hypothesis, though I lay not great stress upon it, for I would not build great matters on it . . . That the doctrine of Praeexistence is *uncertain*, that is, not strictly demonstrable, I grant. And so I am afraid are most speculations else, except some very few fundamentals”<sup>59</sup>.

As an example of a critic from a later generation I quote the English mystic William Law (1686-1761) who – notwithstanding the fact that he recognized in More “a pious Christian, and of great abilities” – remarked that More “knew nothing deeper than a hypothesis, nor truer of the nature of the soul than that which he has said of its pre-existence, which is little better than that foolish brat descended from it, the transmigration of souls”<sup>60</sup>. In more solemn words, but essentially in the same spirit, already in Menasseh’s lifetime the doctrine as it was formulated by Menasseh in his *De Creatione* was heavily attacked by the Leiden professor of theology Johannes Hoornbee(c)k (1617-1666), a redoubtable polemicist and – as a follower of the Utrecht theologian Gisbertus Voetius – a representative of right-wing Calvinist orthodoxy<sup>61</sup>. In 1655 appeared his *Tesjubat Jehudah*<sup>62</sup> – “that book”, says Menasseh, “which he later writ against our nation, wherein he hath objected against us, right or wrong, all that he

<sup>58</sup> Glanvill to Baxter, 4 August 1662: *Dr. Williams’s Library*, London, Baxter’s Letters, MS 59-1-174.

<sup>59</sup> DWL, MS 59-1-170. This letter has been published (though not quite correctly) in *Bibliotheca Platonica*, I (1889), pp. 186-192.

<sup>60</sup> See: J. Hoyles, *The Edges of Augustanism* (International Archives of the History of Ideas, 53; The Hague 1972), p. 110, quoting from J.H. Overton, *William Law* (London, 1881), pp. 407 f.

<sup>61</sup> For Hoornbeeck’s polemical activities, see: J.W. Hofmeyr, *Johannes Hoornbeeck als polemikus* (Kampen, 1975) – a work which only gives a general survey of the subject.

<sup>62</sup> J. Hoornbeeck, *Tesjubat Jehudah sive, pro convincendis et convertendis Judaeis Libri Octo* (Lugd. Bat., 1655).

could scrape together''<sup>63</sup>. Hoornbeeck's work had an apologetic-controversialist as well as a conversionist character – two aspects, which were closely linked together. In the circle of Dutch seventeenth-century Calvinism we meet with a lively interest in the conversion of Jews, fostered by the expectation of a general conversion of the Jews in the last days. Furthermore, a number of Calvinist theologians were convinced that this conversion could be advanced by a polemicist approach which aimed at convincing the Jews of their "errors" by means of theological refutation<sup>64</sup>. One of them – in this context perhaps even the most prominent – was Hoornbeeck, whose *Tesjubat Jehudah*, while in many ways an interesting specimen of theological apologetics, pretended to be an appeal to the Jews to turn towards (Reformed) Christianity.

Hoornbeeck first of all differs from the Platonists in his evaluation of the Kabbalah. As we saw, Platonists, while often deficient in knowledge with regard to this point, could have some sympathy with what they considered the Kabbalistic method. No doubt Hoornbeeck knew more about the Kabbalah than most of the Platonists. He had read Jewish authors on the Kabbalah (among them Menasseh ben Israel); also Christian authors such as Reuchlin and Rittangel. But unlike the Platonists he had a deep aversion from all Kabbalistic speculations. Over against Menasseh's statement that through the Kabbalah we come to know "sublimia mysteria", Hoornbeeck remarks that, however ingenious it may seem to be, nothing is more uncertain and fallacious than the Kabbalah: "Ars est, si modo ars dicenda, inventionis ac commenti humani, inanem faciens, atque ridiculam operam . . ." <sup>65</sup>.

His condemnation of the Kabbalah sets the tone for his treatment of the doctrine of the pre-existence of the human soul, to which he pays comparatively much attention. In accordance with the large majority of Reformed theologians<sup>66</sup> Hoornbeeck was an adherent of the "creationist" doctrine, which held that the human soul was created together with the body: "in hominis generatione creatur anima"<sup>67</sup>. As such, he rejected the idea of "traducianism" (held by the Lutherans), and *a fortiori* the idea of the pre-existence of the soul. In connection with all this he opposed the idea of the paired creation of the male and the female soul and the idea of "metem-

<sup>63</sup> *Vindiciae Judaearum* (1656), 8, repr. in L. Wolf, *Menasseh ben Israel's Mission to Oliver Cromwell* . . . (London, 1901); Menasseh, however, appreciated the fact that Hoornbeeck gave short shrift to the "blood accusation".

<sup>64</sup> See: J. van den Berg, *Joden en Christenen in Nederland gedurende de zeventiende eeuw* (Kampen, 1969).

<sup>65</sup> *Tesjubat Jehudah*, p. 94.

<sup>66</sup> H. Bavinck, *Gereformeerde dogmatiek*, II (Kampen<sup>4</sup>, 1928), p. 542.

<sup>67</sup> *Tesjubat*, p. 329.



psychosis'', which he considered detrimental to the belief in the resurrection: together with which body could or should a soul be presented at the resurrection, which had inhabited various bodies?<sup>68</sup>

The pages Hoornbeeck devotes to the idea of pre-existence are almost a running commentary on Menasseh's expositions of the subject in his *De Creatione* (esp. Probl. XV), which he quotes extensively and literally. In Menasseh's work he distinguishes three kinds of arguments: arguments based on the Old Testament, on the tradition of the wise men among the Jews, and on human reason. With regard to the first category, Hoornbeeck tries to refute Menasseh's appeal to a number of Old Testament texts. He goes from text to text, putting his translation over against that of Menasseh and interspersing his expositions with arguments of a more general or philosophical nature. According to Hoornbeeck, Deut. 29:14 does not say that God enters into a covenant with all souls, but with those who were present and with the "posterī, qui non praesentes erant". In Isaiah 57:16 not all human souls are meant, but "animae hominum qui existunt et vivunt". Of Jer. 1:5 Hoornbeeck gives a quite different translation from that of Menasseh: "antequam te formarem in utero, novi te", thus making this text a proof-text for the idea of God's prescience and of his election of Jeremiah for the prophetic office. Eccl. 4:2 does not say that the unborn men (here, Hoornbeeck avoids the word "soul") were happy, but only that they were not unhappy. And lastly, Job 38:21 is said "per ironiam . . . et non affirmative, sed negative accipiendum"<sup>69</sup>.

With regard to Menasseh's appeal to the Jewish fathers or "sages", Hoornbeeck was somewhat sceptical. He noticed that in *De Creatione* Menasseh averred that the idea of pre-existence was common to all Hebrews, while elsewhere, in *Conciliator*, Menasseh said that most of the Hebrews think like this<sup>70</sup>. It is clear that Hoornbeeck saw the doctrine of pre-existence as it was held by the Jews of his own days as mainly a Kabbalistic doctrine, partly derived from Platonic-Pythagorean sources. He did not recognize a rational argument in Menasseh's exposition of the doctrine; on the contrary, exactly this doctrine led to rational impossibilities, and thus Menasseh's appeal to reason he considered spurious. Within the context of scholastic thinking, one argument used by Menasseh seemed to have some validity: if God indeed created everything within the span of six days, then there can be no creation after that time. Hoornbeeck counters this argument, however, by remarking that God also creates "postea", after the "creatio prima". To deny this would mean the denial of the pos-

<sup>68</sup> *Tesjubat*, p. 547.

<sup>69</sup> *Tesjubat*, pp. 324-328.

<sup>70</sup> *Tesjubat*, p. 321.

sibility of miracles: in every miracle there is always “*aliqua creatio, et productio rei ex nihilo*”<sup>71</sup>.

It is clear that Hoornbeeck's dislike of Kabbalism, his resistance to Platonism and his rejection of the doctrine of pre-existence should be seen in their interrelationship. Hoornbeeck recognizes that Menasseh's appeal to Plato is not without ground, though sometimes he seems to go even further than Plato. But Hoornbeeck rejects Platonism exactly on those points which are important in connection with the idea of pre-existence. He rather contemptuously dismisses Plato's notion of “reminiscence”: “*Platonis ista sententia cordatis risum debet, atque a multis saeculis explosa fuit: ut eam nunc reducere velle, in Cabbalistarum gratiam, nihil sit quam nugis nugis addere, et se omni ex parte prostituere*”<sup>72</sup>. And over against Menasseh's Platonic depreciation of the body – Menasseh describes the body as a most unhappy prison and attributes all human guilt to the body – Hoornbeeck puts his doctrine of the interrelation of soul and body: “*A temperamento corporis haud magis anima pendet in suis operationibus, quam a ratione mentis, corpus*”<sup>73</sup>. Here, the contrast between Platonic and Aristotelian thinking<sup>74</sup> becomes manifest; though in this context Hoornbeeck does not mention the name of Aristotle, as a seventeenth-century orthodox theologian he found his philosophical background in Aristotelianism. And as a consistent Calvinist he had, as we saw, no sympathy whatever with Kabbalism<sup>75</sup>. Hoornbeeck's conclusion is, that neither in Scripture, nor in reason or experience is there any indication or vestige of the idea of pre-existence.

As an able Hebraist, who for conversionist reasons was deeply interested in Judaism, and who because of his Calvinist orientation towards the Old Testament had some affinity with certain aspects of Hebrew thinking, Hoornbeeck had a much more profound knowledge of Jewish theology than More had, whose knowledge of Judaism was rather elementary. But because of his Platonic background, More no doubt could better understand Menasseh's intentions. While for Hoornbeeck the word “*Kabbalah*” had nothing but a negative association, for More (notwithstanding his criticism) the same word had something of a magic sound. And while Hoornbeeck saw Menasseh's doctrine of pre-existence as a compound of nugatory speculations, More shared Menasseh's interest in the radiant

<sup>71</sup> *Tesjubat*, p. 329.

<sup>72</sup> *Tesjubat*, p. 326.

<sup>73</sup> *Tesjubat*, pp. 328, 548.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima*, Book I, 1.

<sup>75</sup> For Calvin's and Beza's rejection of Kabbalistic speculations, see: D.P. Walker, *The Ancient Philosophy*, p. 121; for Hoornbeeck also: J.L. Blau, *The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance* (New York, 1944), p. 111.

world of life and light in which the human souls moved before being confined within the human body. Perhaps this spiritual affinity explains why after many years More still lively remembered his meeting with the Amsterdam rabbi, who like him believed in “pre-existence” – a doctrine, dear to him but repudiated by so many of his fellow-Christians. May we surmise that Menasseh on his side, in those last years of his life, so full of tensions and disappointments, enjoyed his conversation with a Christian theologian who understood and shared his passion for a deeper insight into the mysteries of the soul?

## MENASSEH BEN ISRAEL'S CHRISTIAN CONNECTION: HENRY JESSEY AND THE JEWS

DAVID S. KATZ

“He was of a middle Stature, and inclining to Fatness”, an English contemporary described Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel,

“He always wore his own Hair, which (many years before his Death) was very Grey; so that his Complexion being pretty fresh, his Demeanor Graceful, and Comely, his Habit plain and decent, he Commanded an awful Reverence which was justly due to so venerable a Deportment: In short, he was *un homme sans Passion, sans légèreté, mais Hélas! sans opulence*”<sup>1</sup>.

From his lodgings in the Strand, Menasseh sallied forth to meet politicians, divines, intellectuals, and anyone who conceivably could help him to reach the goal of his English mission: an official authorization of the readmission of the Jews to England after an exile of over three and a half centuries<sup>2</sup>. Menasseh had come to London in September 1655, and although the Whitehall Conference of December failed to resolve the readmission question, he remained in England for exactly two years in the vain hope of obtaining a formal written permission<sup>3</sup>.

During his stay in London, he seems to have established himself, at least among gentiles, as a self-appointed ambassador of world Jewry and as a renowned expert in things Jewish. Menasseh received Ralph Cudworth, the Regius professor of Hebrew, and gave him a manuscript summarizing the Jewish objections to Christianity<sup>4</sup>. He discussed plans for a polyglot bible with Henry Thorndike<sup>5</sup>. He held further meetings with Henry Oldenburg, later secretary of the Royal Society; with Adam Boreel, the Con-

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<sup>1</sup> Menasseh ben Israel, *Of The Term of Life*, ed. T[homas] P[ocoke] (London, 1699), p. viii.

<sup>2</sup> See generally D.S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England, 1603-1655* (Oxford, 1982). On Menasseh's lodgings see L. Wolf, “Menasseh ben Israel's Study in London”, *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society in England*, III (1899), pp. 144-150.

<sup>3</sup> D.S. Katz, “English Redemption and Jewish Readmission in 1656”, *Journal of Jewish Studies*, XXXIV (1983-1984), pp. 73-91.

<sup>4</sup> Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, p. 234 and n. for more on this important MS.

<sup>5</sup> *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1655-1656, pp. 366-367. Brian Walton's *Biblia Sacra Polyglotta* was published in 1657.

tinental theologian; with Robert Boyle and his sister the countess of Ranclagh; and with Edward Lawrence, the son of the president of the Council of State<sup>6</sup>. Menasseh and his wife were well acquainted with John Sadler, the future master of Magdalene College, Cambridge<sup>7</sup>. He seems to have discussed "the doctrines and opinions of the Jews" with Ambrose Barnes, later an important figure in the north of England<sup>8</sup>. He met with Arise Evans, the Welsh tailor-prophet, and weighed the possibility that the exiled Charles II might be the Messiah<sup>9</sup>. Menasseh met Jean d'Espagne, the minister of the French Reformed Church, at the home of the French ambassador, and later disputed with him formally on the relative merits of Judaism and Christianity<sup>10</sup>. He probably renewed his acquaintance with Walter Strickland, and with Cromwell's cousin Oliver St. John, both of whom had visited the synagogue in Amsterdam in 1651<sup>11</sup>. He may have run across Edmund Gayton, one of the old Ben Jonson set, who soon slandered Menasseh in a poem about the rabbi's intentions in England<sup>12</sup>. More importantly, it seems that Menasseh was even "once civilly entertain'd by the Protector [Oliver Cromwell] at his Table"<sup>13</sup>. Cotton Mather the American missionary recalled that in the end, people in those years would believe almost anything "if a Report of a *Menasseh ben Israel* be to back them"<sup>14</sup>.

Certainly we know that while in England between September 1655 and September 1657, Menasseh "had frequent Conferences with some of the Eminent covenanting Divines" and numerous others<sup>15</sup>. His influence was felt among many other Englishmen, especially John Dury and Samuel Hartlib, those famous Puritan planners<sup>16</sup>. Menasseh's standing among Continental gentile intellectuals was no less elevated<sup>17</sup>. But this swarm of

<sup>6</sup> Oldenburg to Menasseh, 25 July 1657: *The Correspondence of Henry Oldenburg*, ed. A.R. & M.B. Hall (Madison, Milwaukee and London, 1965- ), I, pp. 123-127; Menasseh, *Term of Life*, ed. P[ococke], p. vii. Cf. Robert Boyle, *Works* (London, 1772), I, p. 279; n. 183.

<sup>7</sup> Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, pp. 103, 140-141, 194-195, 231, 242, 244.

<sup>8</sup> M.R., *Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Ambrose Barnes*, ed. W.H.D. Longstaffe (Surtees Soc., L, 1866), p. 17.

<sup>9</sup> Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, esp. pp. 121-124; but more importantly, R.H. Popkin, "Menasseh ben Israel and Isaac La Peyrère. II", *Studia Rosenthaliana*, XVIII (1984), pp. 12-20.

<sup>10</sup> Jean d'Espagne, *Les Oeuvres* (The Hague, 1674), I, pp. 470-477; the disputation took place on 2 May 1656. Cf. *idem*, *Examen de XVII. Maximes Judaïques* (London, 1657).

<sup>11</sup> Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, pp. 183-184.

<sup>12</sup> D.S. Katz, "Edmund Gayton's Anti-Jewish Poem Addressed to Menasseh ben Israel, 1656", *Jewish Quarterly Review*, n.s., LXXI (1981), pp. 239-250.

<sup>13</sup> Menasseh, *Term of Life*, ed. P[ococke], p. iv.

<sup>14</sup> Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana* (London, 1702), bk. III, p. 193.

<sup>15</sup> Menasseh, *Term of Life*, ed. P[ococke], p. iv.

<sup>16</sup> Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, caps. 5 & 6.

<sup>17</sup> D.S. Katz, "Menasseh ben Israel's Mission to Queen Christina of Sweden, 1651-1655", *Jewish Social Studies*, XLV (1983-1984), pp. 57-72.

great actors has perhaps unjustly obscured from view the man who stage-managed Menasseh ben Israel's English production and publicized it once it was underway.

This was Henry Jessey (1601-1663), the Baptist clergyman, one of the first Englishmen who wrote to the famous Dutch rabbi. Menasseh held Jessey to be a "worthy Christian Minister", and Jessey repaid the compliment by publishing the sympathetic famous *Narrative* of the Whitehall Conference which is known to all Anglo-Jewish historians<sup>18</sup>. But whereas the reasons for Menasseh's interest in Henry Jessey are self-evident, never has the background and manifestation of Jessey's extremely active philo-Semitism been elucidated. The publication of the *Narrative* was only one of a string of striking efforts in which Jessey worked on behalf of the Jews. Indeed, we find Henry Jessey lurking behind almost every significant aspect of Jewish-Christian cooperation in mid-seventeenth-century England, and his unmasking is long overdue.

Henry Jessey has in recent years been resurrected as an important, if somewhat eccentric figure in the religious history of the civil war period<sup>19</sup>. His importance is usually derived from his leadership of the Jacob Church, the parent congregation for nearly all of the separate churches, the non-parochial Protestant congregations of London<sup>20</sup>. A recent book portrays Jessey as one of the chief architects of "respectable nonconformity", and chides those historians who have stressed unduly the influence of "the lunatic fringe" of Protestant sectarianism<sup>21</sup>. But the fact that Jessey was one of the founders of the group which would later develop into the Baptist denomination did not provide him with immunity from the effects of radical religion. For Jessey was also a millenarian, closely associated with the Fifth Monarchy Men, and in later years involved with those who would, after his death, bring the news of Sabbatai Ševi, the Jewish false Messiah, to Englishmen hungry for accurate reports of this harbinger of Redemption. Jessey was involved in converting Jews to Christianity, and in collecting charity for the impoverished Jews of Jerusalem. Indeed, Jessey appears in virtually every facet of contemporary Christian-Jewish

<sup>18</sup> See below, p. 126.

<sup>19</sup> See esp. B.R. White, "Henry Jessey: A Pastor in Politics", *Baptist Quarterly*, XXV (1973-1974), pp. 98-110; *idem*, "Henry Jessey in the Great Rebellion", in *Reformation, Conformity, and Dissent: Essays in Honour of Geoffrey Nuttall*, ed. R. Buick Knox (London, 1977), pp. 132-153.

<sup>20</sup> This church was founded by Henry Jacob in 1616: from it derived all of the separate churches in London apart from the anti-Calvinist General Baptist congregations, which traced their origins to a division in John Smyth's congregation in exile in Holland.

<sup>21</sup> M. Tolmie, *The Triumph of the Saints: The Separate Churches of London 1616-1649* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. ix-xi.

relations, including the efforts to obtain the resettlement of the Jews in England. Lastly, Henry Jessey was a Saturday-Sabbatarian:

“As for what he held (in his latter days) concerning the seventh day Sabbath, to be kept by Christians Evangelically; (without Jewish Services or Ceremonies) he managed his Judgment and practice therein with great caution; that there might be no offence or breaches among Professours; for at first for some considerable time, (near two years) he kept his opinion much to himself, and then afterwards (when he had communicated it to others) he observed the day in his own Chamber, with only 4 or 5 more of the same mind, and on the first day of the week he preached, and met publickly and privately as before”<sup>22</sup>.

One of these men may have been John Traske the notorious Jacobean Judaizer, who was a member of the flock which Jessey led<sup>23</sup>. Jessey even believed that “the Lords *Sabbaths* begins on the *Evening* before”, in Jewish fashion<sup>24</sup>. As we shall see, Henry Jessey was in many respects the seminal figure in English Saturday-Sabbatarianism.

Henry Jessey is also important for the history of religious radicalism in England because he illustrates the reaction of such men to the reality of political defeat at the Restoration. Jessey’s response was to hang on to victory by searching out divine signs of God’s continued devotion to the Good Old Cause, despite the apparent adversity of the faithful. It was his scouring of the countryside for evidence of “prodigies” and strange occurrences that occasioned his imprisonment and hastened his death. Certainly Jessey was a moderate in politics, and this is what enabled him to remain in contact with both Cromwell and the radicals. But his place at the source and center of English Saturday-Sabbatarianism ensured that his unique combination of religious radicalism and political moderation would help such views survive the crisis of the Restoration.

<sup>22</sup> E[dward] W[histon], *The Life and Death of Mr. Henry Jessey* (n.p., 1671), p. 87. This is the major source for the life of Jessey: the *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, s.v. “Jessey or Jacie, Henry”, notes that “its substantial accuracy is shown wherever it is possible to test it by contemporary records”. Generally, see D.S. Katz, *Sabbath and Sectarianism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Leiden, 1988).

<sup>23</sup> C. Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters* (Cambridge, 1912), II, p. 300: repr. from the “Jessey Memorandum”, a MS. history of the congregation covering the years 1616-1641, probably written by Jessey himself, and which now exists only in a copy made in 1711 or 1712 by a Baptist minister in London named Benjamin Stinton, who had the original MS. (now lost) from another Baptist minister named Richard Adams: Regent’s Park College, Oxford; Angus Library, Fire Proof Cabinet: printed in *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, I (1908-1909), pp. 203-225 and Burrage, *Dissenters*, II, pp. 292-302. Cf. membership list of Jacob-Jessey church, 1618-1678 in *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, I (1908-1909), pp. 250-256. Rice Boye, another member of the Jacob-Jessey church, may have published another book by Traske after his death which has not survived: Edward Norice, *The New Gospel* (London, 1638), p. 4. For more on Traske, see Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, cap. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Henry Jessey, *Miscellanea Sacra* (London, 1665), p. 8.

## I

The first overt manifestation of Henry Jessey's growing interest in the Jews and their religion came in a short postscript which he appended to a letter which Nathaniel Homes the divine sent to Menasseh ben Israel on 24 December 1649, asking for confirmation of the Dutch rabbi's published opinions on the calling of the Jews<sup>25</sup>. Homes himself had concluded that "we can expect no more *then*, in the said 1655 year, but the call of the *Jewes*, who from that time shall strive with the *Turke*, and all enemies of the *Jewes* conversion five and forty yeers, *Dan.* 12. afore their settlement, before which *Call* I expect the fall of the *Roman Antichrist*"<sup>26</sup>. This is a view which Homes held all his life, even after the appointed year failed to bring the Return of Christ: he was still hopeful of their conversion in 1665<sup>27</sup>. The central importance of millenarianism to English religious thought in the seventeenth century, and the crucial role which the Jews were thought to play in the Second Coming, has been described before<sup>28</sup>. But what is important here is that certainly by the end of 1649, Henry Jessey had adopted these widely held views which would ultimately change his religious outlook entirely.

Jessey's letter to Menasseh ben Israel won him a personal gift copy of the *Hope of Israel* in the Latin edition published at Amsterdam in 1650<sup>29</sup>. This was the book in which Menasseh told the tale of the discovery of a tribe of Israelite Indians in South America which seemed to presage both the coming of the Messiah and the readmission of the Jews to England<sup>30</sup>. Jessey's copy is covered with numerous notes and annotations, with even a correction of Menasseh's Hebrew spelling of "Ophir". Jessey was careful to note the difference in chapter citations between the Latin and the English editions. In a notation at the back of his copy, Jessey correctly recorded that the story of the Israelite Indians was first reported fully in a work by Thomas Thorowgood in which was printed a letter in French from Menasseh to John Dury<sup>31</sup>. "Menasses ben Israel bear witness", Jessey wrote, "y' this present Paper hath been Copied w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>c</sup> whole trueth of y<sup>c</sup>

<sup>25</sup> N. Homes & H. Jessey to Menasseh ben Israel, 24 December 1649: repr. in P. Felgenhauer, *Bonum Nuncium Israeli* (Amsterdam, 1655), pp. 103-106.

<sup>26</sup> Nathaniel Homes, *The Resurrection Revealed* (London, 1654), pp. 30, 427, 562.

<sup>27</sup> Nathaniel Homes, "A brief Chronology concerning the Jews", in *Two Journeys to Jerusalem*, ed. R.B. [Nathaniel Crouch] (London, 1719), pp. 118-123.

<sup>28</sup> Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, cap. 3; *idem*, "English Redemption".

<sup>29</sup> Now Dr. Williams's Library, London, 3008 D. 22.

<sup>30</sup> See Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, cap. 4.

<sup>31</sup> John Dury, "An Epistolical Discourse", in Thomas Thorowgood, *Leaves in America* (London, 1650), sigs. E'-E2. The first news of Menasseh's interview with Montezinos arrived in England by way of Edward Winslow, *The Glorious Progress* (London, 1649), repr. *Coll. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, 3rd ser., IV (1834), pp. 69-98, esp. pp. 73-74.



Originall. And y' y<sup>e</sup> Author Montezinus is a Vertuous man – And y' he Sware in my presence, y' all he declared, was trueth''. This information, Jessey testified, was received by John Dury at London on 27 November 1649<sup>32</sup>.

Henry Jessey's activities during the 1640s and early 1650s demonstrate a continuing interest in millenarianism and divine intervention. Thomas Edwards the heresy hunter claimed that in about 1646 Jessey, Hanserd Knollys the Baptist pioneer and others annointed an old woman with oil in an attempt to restore her sight<sup>33</sup>. Later on, at Bristol in about 1653, Jessey successfully conducted the exorcism of a demon from a young girl there "by fasting and prayer"<sup>34</sup>. Indeed, one of his most successful pamphlets was published during this period and went through many editions, being an account of the spiritual and perhaps mental sufferings of a sixteen-year-old girl from London named Sarah Wight. According to Jessey, "The Lord enabled this *weak earthen vessell* to utter forth *ex tempore*, in *Soliloquies*, from April 9. til April 20. [1647] when shee knew not that others listened, and heard her''. Jessey recorded her inspired speeches, and provided a table for the reader of the relevant Biblical allusions and parallels. Sarah Wight was frequently driven "to destroy her selfe, as by drowning, strangling, stabbing, seeking to beat out her braines, wretchedly bruising, and wounding her self''. It was on one of these occasions, on her way to the Thames to drown herself, that Sarah Wight was conscious of a supernatural call to go hear Jessey lecture on the calling of the Jews. After the sermon, Sarah Wight confirmed the Lord's intention to show mercy to them, "*the basest people on earth*". Sarah Wight must have been famous in her day, and was visited not only by such eminent divines as Thomas Goodwin, Hugh Peter, Walter Cradock, John Simpson, Praise-God Barbon and others, but also by noble ladies as well<sup>35</sup>. Among the callers was also a woman named "Hanna Trapnel", who six years later would undergo a more notorious but identical crisis outside the very door of parliament, incorporating the same noteworthy features of extraordinary fasting and divinely inspired soliloquies<sup>36</sup>. Sarah Wight was still

<sup>32</sup> Dr. Williams's Library, 3008 D. 22, p. 111.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas Edwards, *The Third Part of Gangraena* (London, 1646), p. 19.

<sup>34</sup> *The Records of a Church . . . in Broadmead, Bristol*, ed. E.B. Underhill (Hanserd Knollys Soc., 1847), pp. 194-195. Jessey also baptized some of the members of that church in 1653-1654, "According to scripture example, in a river".

<sup>35</sup> Henry Jesse, *The exceeding Riches of Grace Advanced . . . in an Empty Nothing Creature* (London, 1647), sigs. A2, A5-A6<sup>v</sup>, A7<sup>v</sup>, a<sup>v</sup>; pp. 5-6, 8, 10-11, 29, 31-32, 33-34. A preface by John Saltmarsh is on sig. A2<sup>r-v</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, sig. a<sup>v</sup>: Hannah (or Anna) Trapnel appears in the list of callers printed in the 3rd edn (1648), sig. a<sup>r</sup> as well, but by the publication of the 6th edn (1652), p. R, she had been quietly excised, along with "Dinah the Black", who was baptized in 1649 (according to Jessey, *A Storehouse of Provision* [London, 1650], p. 126).

attracting curious visitors, not always with religious intentions, as late as 1658<sup>37</sup>.

Jessey also published an account of the missionary activity of a Dutch preacher on Formosa, and of the work of John Eliot among the Indians of North America. Both of these peoples were often thought to be among the most likely candidates for the descendants of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel, whose conversion to Christ would herald His return<sup>38</sup>. In 1645, Jessey began publishing his Scripture Calendar, which appeared annually until his death. These works also clearly demonstrate his searchings for divine signs in the accounts of events of this world<sup>39</sup>.

Some of these concerns were also reflected in a more theological work which Jessey published in 1650, in which he warned his readers that within the next four years one might expect "such a powerful *compleating*, and perfecting of the *witnesse of Iesus Christ*" that the unnecessary barriers between the various sects and religions would be washed away. In the meantime, Jessey expressed his approval for "enjoying Communion, together by Believers, that Differ about *Baptisme*"<sup>40</sup>. These millenarian views were made even more explicit in his introduction to a book on the imminent Second Coming written by Mary Cary. Here Jessey promised to publish a work he had written earlier which proved that we might soon witness "*the conversion of the JEWS probably before 1658, and of the SCRIPTURE ORDER in these proceedings, before the conversion of the Jews, and thence until the THOUSAND yeers of Christs REIGN begin, and of marvelous things therein and afterwards*"<sup>41</sup>. Later on in that year 1658, Jessey reminded his readers that the Lord was about "to roare aloud from Heaven, intending thereby (in all likelihood) either to rouze us up out of our present great security, or to leave us the more without excuse, in the day of his fierce wrath"<sup>42</sup>.

Jessey was also publicly identified with Fifth Monarchists in several

<sup>37</sup> Henry Jessy, *Exceeding Riches* (7th edn, London, 1658), sig. A7<sup>r-v</sup>. The book appeared in numerous editions until 1798.

<sup>38</sup> M.C. Sibellius, *Of The Conversion of Five Thousand and Nine Hundred East-Indians* (London, 1650), trans. with preface by Jessey, with postscript on the progress of the gospel in New England. For the Lost Ten Tribes and John Eliot, see Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, cap. 4.

<sup>39</sup> See below, p. 136.

<sup>40</sup> Jessey, *Storehouse*, sigs. A5<sup>v</sup>-A6; pp. 93, 102. On p. 124, Jessey records the conversion of a Portuguese Jew named Abraham Abrabanel *alias* De Mello.

<sup>41</sup> M[ary] Cary, *The Little Horns Doom & Downfall* (London, 1651), sigs. A6<sup>r</sup>-A7<sup>v</sup>. Hugh Peter and Christopher Feake also wrote introductions to this work.

<sup>42</sup> [Anon.], *A True Relation of A very strange and wonderful Thing* (London, 1658), p. 1. The following notation by Joseph Ivimey, the Baptist historian, dated 19 May 1814, appears with the copy of the work in Regent's Park College (2 c. 1): "The stile of this . . . is so much like 'The Lord's loud Call &c' by Henry Jessey of London, that I have no doubt it was written by him". It was probably also Jessey who annotated a printed "Chronological Table" of the period between Creation and the Crucifixion, now Regent's Park College, 2 c. 1.

manifestos which were published in pamphlet form. Jessey was one of the signatories to a declaration which appeared (anonymously in the first edition) in November 1647 in defense of the sectarian congregations which had been severely attacked by Thomas Edwards in his *Gangraena* published in the previous year. Jessey's fellow signatories included William Greenhill, John Simpson, Christopher Feake, and Hanserd Knollys. They stressed the need for self-government within the churches without the exercise of "a coercive and worldly power" by the state, while recognizing the need for "a kindly government" to protect society from the natural wickedness of men. Furthermore, they stressed that "the ranging of men into several and subordinate ranks and degrees is a thing necessary for the common good". They countered any association of the sectarians with the enthusiasts of Münster by an explicit affirmation of the right of private property and a firm denunciation of polygamy<sup>43</sup>.

Jessey's dedication to the eternal role of the Jews found its clearest expression during this period in his celebrated book entitled *The Glory of Iehudah and Israel*. Menasseh ben Israel himself notes that he preferred not to write of "the Nobility of the Jews: but because that Point is enough known amongst all Christians, as lately yet it hath been most worthily and excellently shewed and described in a certain Book, called, *The Glory of Iehudah and Israel*, dedicated to our Nation by that worthy Christian Minister Mr. *Henry Jessey*, (1653. in Duch) where this matter is set out at large"<sup>44</sup>. Edward Whiston, Jessey's seventeenth-century biographer, similarly recorded that he "in 1650, wrote a compleat Treatise yet extant, and called (the glory & Salvation of Jehudah, and Israel) tending towards the reconciliation of *Jews* and *Christians*, discovering the agreement of them both in Fundamental Grounds of Religion, especially concerning the *Messiah*"<sup>45</sup>. This is presumably the work Jessey referred to in his introduction to Mary Cary's millenarian treatise. No copy of Jessey's original book in English has yet been discovered, but Whiston provides a neat summary of its main arguments. Apparently, Jessey began his work with a demonstration of the virtues of the Jews "above all the Families of the Earth, the Crown and top of whose Glory, lay in the promised *Messiah*". Jessey then showed that the Messiah must be both God and man, and that he was to have come before the destruction of the Second Temple "as is confessed by many Jewish Doctors; who say the time is past, and that he is come long agoe though he be hid from them". This postulate leads Jessey

<sup>43</sup> [Anon.], *A Declaration of the Congregationall Societies* (London, 1647); repr. *Confessions of Faith*, ed. E.B. Underhill (Hanserd Knollys Soc., 1854), pp. 273-287. The Declaration was reissued with the name of the signatories in 1651.

<sup>44</sup> Menasseh ben Israel, *The Humble Addresses* ([London, 1655]), p. 23.

<sup>45</sup> Whiston, *Life and Death*, p. 79.

naturally to the claim that Jesus is the Messiah, and that "he will return again in Majesty to judge the world". Finally, Jessey's biographer states, he "winds up all with a Patheticall and convincing exhortation to Repentance and Brokenness of heart for their Forefathers crucifying this just One, and their own slowness of heart to believe all things that are written in the law and Prophets concerning him". Whiston claims that this treatise was put in the hands of "some of the late assembly of Divines read and approved with this Subscription, wishing that we with all the Jews in the World, might be partakers of this Tractate". He concluded with the note that it had already been translated into Hebrew, "and dispersed among the Jews of Divers Nations"<sup>46</sup>.

So between the execution of Charles I in 1649 and the dissolution of the Rump Parliament in 1653, in this the most vigorous and confident period of the English Revolution, Henry Jessey distinguished himself not only as a millenarian who looked for the Coming of the Messiah even in his own days, but as one of those who emphasized the role of the Jews in this final cosmic drama.

## II

We need to look again at Jessey's moderating role among the political millenarians in the two years before Oliver Cromwell summoned the Whitehall Conference in December 1655 to discuss Menasseh ben Israel's proposals for the resettlement of the Jews in England. This was in large measure a period of disillusionment for radicals of all varieties, who until the collapse of the nominated Barebones Parliament of the saints at the end of 1653 had seen Cromwell as almost a Messianic figure. Unlike many of

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81. No copy of the Hebrew trans. has been found either. J.C. Wolf, *Bibliotheca Hebraea* (Hamburg & Leipzig, 1715-1733), IV, p. 901, refers to a book written in Flemish (Belgice) by Henr. Jesse. N. Sokolow, *History of Zionism 1600-1918* (London, 1919), pp. 214-215, refers to a catalogue of the library of Mr. Leon V. Saraval of Trieste published in 1853 in which the book is included as item number 619 with the following notation: "Jesse Henry de Heerlichkeydt en Heyl van Jehuda en Israel (en langue flamande, traduit de l'anglais.) Amst. 1653 in 8° . . . très rare". Sokolow notes that in 1853 the Saraval library was purchased for the Breslau Seminary. Most of these books were destroyed during the Second World War, and Dr. Jozef Długosz, director of the Biblioteka Uniwersytecka in Wrocław (Breslau), Poland, writes (28 October 1983) that they do not have the book. See also C.W. Schoneveld, *Intertraffic of the Mind* (Leiden, 1983), who includes a checklist of nearly 650 books translated from English into Dutch in the seventeenth century, but does not cite Jessey's work. Cf. Thomas Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists* (London, 1738-1740), I, pp. 318-319. But now a copy of the Dutch edition of Jessey's book has been discovered by Dr. Ernestine van der Wall in the library at Wolfenbüttel (916.2 Th.[3]): Henry Jesse, *De Heerlichkeydt en Heyl van Jehuda en Israel* (Amsterdam, 1653). See her article about it, "A Philo-Semitic Millenarian on the Reconciliation of Jews and Christians", in *Sceptics, Millenarians, and Jews*, ed. J.I. Israel and D.S. Katz (Leiden, forthcoming).

his fellow religious radicals, who lapsed into unfocused and potentially violent opposition to the Protectorate, Henry Jessey found a new and more constructive object of attention in the campaign to readmit the Jews to England.

One of the two major contemporary sources regarding the Whitehall Conference, especially its closed meetings, is Henry Jessey's *Narrative* which was published anonymously the following year<sup>47</sup>. The question of the readmission of the Jews was on many people's minds at the end of 1655, but certainly Jessey's interest and initiative in publishing this short work was of a somewhat different order. Indeed, throughout the later 1650s, Jessey worked consistently not only for readmission, but more generally to ease the temporal sufferings of Jews in Eastern Europe and Palestine. His well-known efforts at the time of the Whitehall Conference can only be understood as part of his millenarian and conversionist work before, during, and after the years of Menasseh's visit to England. This was the practical application of his Judeocentric millenarianism.

Jessey's active attempts to alleviate the plight of European Jewry began when the Swedish invasions of 1655 cut off the flow of charity to the Jewish communities in Jerusalem. Without European help, the Palestinian Jews "were brought . . . into great extremity, not only of Famine and nakedness . . . but also by the imprisonment and scourgings of their Elders and Rabbyes, by their Creditors"<sup>48</sup>. The Jews of Jerusalem decided to send two of their men to Europe to enlist the support of their more fortunate brethren. One of these was Rabbi Nathan Shapira, "a man of great learning, and skill in their *Cabala*, and of a very pious, holy and humble disposition"<sup>49</sup>. No further information whatsoever exists concerning the second ambassador; Rabbi Nathan Shapira, however, was one of the most important emissaries of the Jews of Jerusalem during the seventeenth century<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> [Henry Jessey], *A Narrative of the Late Proceeds at White-Hall Concerning the Jews* (London, 1656).

<sup>48</sup> W[histon], *Life and Death*, pp. 69-70. Rabbi Nathan is referred to as "Nathan Levita" in Whiston.

<sup>49</sup> [Anon.], *An Information, Concerning the Present State of the Jewish Nation in Europe and Judea* (London, 1658), p. 5. This pamphlet appears in the 1945 edn of Wing under the name of John Dury (Wing D2863). In the 1972 edn, it was removed from the canon of Dury's writings and the entry cancelled. But on a copy of the work in the Bodl. Lib. (Vet. A 3 e. 838) purchased in 1928 is the following notation, written in a seventeenth-century hand: "aut. Jo. Duraco".

<sup>50</sup> The name of the second emissary is not given here, nor in the writings of Rabbi Nathan Shapira himself, nor in A. Ya'ari, *Emissaries from Palestine* (Jerusalem, 1951) (in Hebrew), where more information on Nathan Shapira appears, pp. 277-281. The role of Nathan Shapira during this period is admirably illustrated in R.H. Popkin, "The Visit of Rabbi Shapira to Amsterdam in 1657", in *Dutch Jewish History*, ed. J. Michman (Jerusalem, 1984), pp. 185-205.

Rabbi Nathan Shapira first journeyed to Italy, and there published in 1655 a book entitled *Tuv HaAretz* ("The Goodness of the Holy Land") with the aim of relating to mankind the holiness of Palestine according to the Kabbalah<sup>51</sup>. From Italy Rabbi Nathan travelled to Hamburg, where it was recorded in the community records that "he showed us letters in which was described the great distress in Jerusalem as a result of the lack of financial support from Poland, and it was decided to pay him in Venice one hundred Reichsdollars"<sup>52</sup>.

It appears that Rabbi Nathan Shapira's next stop was Amsterdam, where he turned to Menasseh ben Israel for help in rescuing the Jews of Jerusalem. Certainly Menasseh knew of their plight by December 1655, when he told Henry Jessey that he had shown Cromwell letters from Jerusalem to "*other Jews in Germany, and Holland, &c: sent thither by the hand of R. Nathan Stephira their Messenger*". Menasseh's letters told of the "very great streighs" of the Jews in Poland, Lithuania and Prussia due to the Swedish wars, as a result of which the "yearly Alms to the poor Jewes (of the Germane Synagogue) at *Jerusalem* hath ceased; and of 700 Widows, and poor Jews there, about four hundred have been famished, as a Letter from *Jerusalem* to their friends relates"<sup>53</sup>. Rabbi Nathan Shapira was probably the original source of the accounts of the eastern European Jews which appeared in the London press during the Whitehall Conference. In one number it was reported that the Jews had presented a petition to the Emperor for protection, as they had "been soundly pillaged, and many massacred in *Poland*"<sup>54</sup>. In a later issue it was reported that many Jews had come to Hamburg, having been "ruinated and plundered of all their Goods in Poland"<sup>55</sup>. At the same time, a news-sheet announced the impending visit to Vienna of the "Patriarch or Generall of the Jewes" from Jerusalem connected with the appearance of an "unknown starr very bright going from the East towards the North"<sup>56</sup>.

Menasseh was also said to have presented evidence that Jews in Roman Catholic countries were persecuted by the Papists, who demanded their immediate conversion. Jews in these countries "must wear a badge of it; & are exposed to many violencies, mocks, & cruelties; which to avoid, many dissemble themselves to be *Roman-Catholicks*; and then if in any thing they appear *Jewish*, they forfeit goods, if not life also". Henry Jessey claimed that "some of these entreated *Rabbi Manasses* to be their Agent, to

<sup>51</sup> Nathan Shapira, *Tuv HaAretz* (Venice, 1655) (in Hebrew); Ya'ari, *Emissaries*, p. 278.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> [Jessey], *Narrative*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>54</sup> *Publick Intelligencer*, 11 (10-17 December 1655), p. 169.

<sup>55</sup> *Mercurius Politicus*, 289 (20-27 December 1655), p. [5841].

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 228 (13-20 December 1655), p. 5831.

entreat this favour for their coming to *England*, to live and Trade here, &c.”<sup>57</sup> One of these men was Raphael Haim Supino, a Jew of Leghorn who arrived in London about the same time as Menasseh in order to settle a case coming up in the Admiralty court concerning some merchandise of his which had been captured on a French boat. The envoy of the grand duke of Tuscany in London, Francesco Salvetti, was sure that Supino had something to do with Menasseh’s mission, but could not put his finger on anything definite<sup>58</sup>.

In any case, Supino certainly made no secret of his Jewish religion, and even in a city like London, riddled with outlandish sects and religious groups, he must have attracted a good deal of notice, and it is probably during the period of the Whitehall Conference that he came to the attention of Henry Jessey as well. Supino seems to have struck a chord with Father Egidio (Gilles) Chaissy, the French domestic chaplain to Salvetti the Tuscan envoy. Chaissy wrote to the Grand Duke that “Nous avons icy a Londres un Juif de Ligourne assez habille (dit on) en ce qui est de sa langue et de sa religion, il est Ministre de la Circoncision”. Chaissy was pleased that he himself had been pressed by “les persones les plus considerables de Londres et des Universités” to engage the Jew in religious debate. It was decided to wait until the Whitehall Conference had made its final determination of the Jewish readmission question. When it was clear that the issue would be allowed to remain unresolved, the debate was cancelled. Chaissy claimed that the possibility of such a meeting had been discussed with many people, “Seign<sup>rs</sup>, Courtizans et Escoliers”, so Supino’s presence in London must have been common knowledge among those who took an interest in the proceedings of the Whitehall Conference, including Henry Jessey<sup>59</sup>.

Raphael Supino may be the Jew of Leghorn, “one that could speak a little English, a very grave proper man” who discussed the coming of the Messiah with some English seamen from the frigate *Phoenix* when they visited the Jewish synagogue there in 1652<sup>60</sup>. Henry Jessey may also have had Supino in mind when he reported that:

<sup>57</sup> [Jessey], *Narrative*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>58</sup> Salvetti’s letters are preserved in the State Archives of Florence, but copies exist in Brit. Lib., Add. MS. 27,962. Transcripts from the Florence MSS. with a partial translation from the Italian was repr. C. Roth, “New Light on the Resettlement”, *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society in England*, XI (1928), pp. 112-142. This reference, Salvetti to Senator Bali Gondi, 7/17 December 1655, see *ibid.*, pp. 128, 137-138 and *Cal. S.P. Ven., 1655-1656*, p. 160n. I have not found any further information about Supino’s case in the Admiralty Court, apart from the note in the above letter.

<sup>59</sup> Chaissy to Ferdinand II, Grand Duke of Tuscany, 23 December 1655: repr. Roth, “New Light”, p. 137.

<sup>60</sup> [Jessey], *Narrative*, p. 11.

"Merchants had come from beyond seas to *London*, and hoped they might have enjoyed as much privilege here, in respect of Trading, and of their Worshipping the God of *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, here, in Synagogues, publicly, as they enjoy in *Holland*, and did enjoy in *Poland, Prussia*, and other places. But after the conference and Debate at *VWhite-Hall* was ended, they heard by some, that the greater part of the Ministers were against this: therefore they removed hence again to beyond the Seas, with much grief of heart, that they were thus disappointed of their hopes"<sup>61</sup>.

The connection between Jessey and Supino is even more intriguing in light of the Jew's later role as one of the main conduits of information regarding the activities of the Jewish false Messiah, Sabbatai Şevi. Several of the pamphlets published in London reporting the progress of the Sabbatean movement in Palestine contain letters written by Supino himself from Leghorn, a chief entrepôt of Jewish intelligence<sup>62</sup>. Raphael Supino was certainly in contact with Benjamin Levy, a leader of the Jewish community in London, to whom he reported on the subject of Sabbatai Şevi<sup>63</sup>. Indeed, when Jacob Sasportas, the former *Haham* of the London Jews, launched his courageous attack on the new heresy sweeping across Jewish Europe, he focused on Raphael Supino, and denounced the transgressions of the "Messiah" as reported from Leghorn<sup>64</sup>. Curiously enough, even after Sabbatai Şevi converted to Islam and his entire movement collapsed, Supino continued to maintain a center of devotion in his house at Leghorn<sup>65</sup>.

Henry Jessey, then, was connected in some fashion as early as 1655 with the man who would later become an important nerve-center of European Sabbateanism. Similar contacts were forged after the Whitehall Conference ended, having failed to come to a final decision regarding the readmission of the Jews, when Jessey continued his efforts to find relief for the

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>62</sup> R.R., *The Restauration of the Jewes* (London, 1665): partially repr. M. Wilensky in *Zion*, XVII (1952), 160-164: on p. 163, he is referred to as "Rapheck Supi"; [Anon.], *Several New Letters Concerning the Jewes* (London, 1666): part. repr. Wilensky, pp. 164-166 & *Anglo-Jewish Letters*, ed. C. Roth (London, 1938), pp. 72-74; [Anon.], *A New Letter Concerning the Jewes* (London, 1666): part. repr. Wilensky, pp. 167-169 & *Letters*, ed. Roth, pp. 70-72. Prof. G. Scholem, *Sabbatai Şevi* (London, 1973), p. 347 even refers to Raphael Supino as "the companion of Menasseh ben Israel on the latter's mission to London".

<sup>63</sup> Jacob Sasportas, *Sefer Tzitzit Nobel Tzvi*, ed. I. Tishbi (Jerusalem, 1954) (in Hebrew), p. 74; Roth, "New Light", pp. 124-125.

<sup>64</sup> Jacob Sasportas was appointed *Haham* in 1663 and fled London for Hamburg during the Great Plague of 1665, never to return. During the Sabbatean mania, he was one of the few Jewish leaders in Europe who consistently denounced Sabbatai Şevi as a false messiah. On 10 March 1666, he wrote to Supino asking for further information (*Tzitzit*, pp. 68-70). Supino's reply (*ibid.*, pp. 70-74) was enthusiastically millennialist and Sasportas attacked Supino in a letter which was never received, probably intercepted by supporters of Sabbatai Şevi (*ibid.*, pp. 80-105).

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82; Roth, "New Light", pp. 125-126. Supino died in about 1691.



destitute Jews of Jerusalem. Jessey's seventeenth-century biographer notes that those who suffered were "the onely then *Germane Jews at Jerusalem*, for the Congregation of *Portugal Jews* were relieved by the Alms of their Rich Brethren in *Portugal*". These Ashkenazi Jews were the ones who sent Rabbi Nathan Shapira on his mission to Europe, and to Amsterdam, where he gave Menasseh ben Israel the information which the Dutch rabbi relayed to Oliver Cromwell. The sum which Shapira managed to collect on his travels only served to pay the interest on the Jewish debts, and Jessey's biographer claims that "they had still perished, if the bowels of Christians in *Holland*, had not compassionated their State". The Dutch gentiles collected money among themselves, "and by Letters did earnestly press Mr. H.[enry] J.[essey] to further a Collection in England"<sup>66</sup>. Chief among these "Christian friends" with whom Rabbi Nathan Shapira "became accidentally acquainted", and who put him in touch with Henry Jessey in England was Peter Serrarius of Amsterdam, who reported on Rabbi Shapira's views to John Dury in England<sup>67</sup>.

Jessey's biographer explains that he was unwilling to abuse the demonstrated good-will of his Dutch associates until he had investigated the method by which the charity would be distributed. Jessey had the commissions of the Jerusalem elders checked with Jewish leaders in Germany and the Netherlands who testified that they knew the hands which signed those documents, as well as the sterling characters of those men, and added that they themselves had contributed on the basis of the same information. The money itself would be transported and guaranteed by two merchants from Frankfort who demanded a letter from the congregation in Jerusalem to the Dutch Christians, "both in way of Receipt and Gratitude". Jessey was sent the original Hebrew commissions, and these arrangements removed all doubts from his mind<sup>68</sup>. Three hundred pounds had been collected in London and dispatched to Jerusalem in 1656, and a bill of receipt and a letter of thanks returned to Jessey. Some money was also sent to Poland to help the distressed Jews there as well<sup>69</sup>. Jessey's aims were clearly con-

<sup>66</sup> W[histon], *Life and Death*, pp. 69-70. Cf. [Anon.], *Information*, pp. 5, 6; Crosby, *History*, I, pp. 316-318, who says that the Christians of Holland sent 500 rixdollars.

<sup>67</sup> [Anon.], *Information*, p. 5. Peter Serrarius remains a shadowy and often misidentified figure: see J. Van den Berg, "Quaker and Chiliast: The 'Contrary Thoughts' of William Ames and Petrus Serrarius", in *Reformation*, ed. Knox, pp. 180-198.

<sup>68</sup> W[histon], *Life and Death*, pp. 70-78.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* The letter of thanks has since disappeared: it was "an Authentique Copie, written by the said R. Samuel [Ben Seth], and signed by all the Elders of the High-Dutch Synagogue at *Jerusalem*, 1657. April. 22", and described in [Anon.], *Information*, sigs. D-D2v; pp. 5-6. The Hebrew commissions have also not been found. The same source (*ibid.*, p. 5) notes that the Jerusalem Jews received about £1,313 5s. from "the Christians in *Holland*": "With this money they went away; and it availed them only to discharge the Interests of their capital debts, and to make some presents to their great ones, that further time might be

versionist: along with the money was sent a short proselytizing letter from the London ministers to the Jews of Jerusalem<sup>70</sup>. Jessey and John Dury sent a separate appeal of their own<sup>71</sup>.

Furthermore, as an even more personal follow-up to his efforts on behalf of Palestinian and east European Jewry during this period, Jessey had the opportunity to send along to Hartlib and Dury a Jewish refugee who "fled from the persecution of Jews in Poland and that seemes more convinced y' Jesus is the Mesias then y' professes to be a Jew & not a Christian in Religion". The Jew, named Meyer Isaac "being directed unto me by some" had extreme difficulty in conversing with Jessey as they had no language in common, but managed to convey to him that his main objection to Christianity was that "he thinks Christians beleive there are 3 Gods & Jews confess but one". Jessey told Hartlib and Dury that he "should be glad if any may further him to imployment that he may have food and raiment, & not be discouraged amongst us. But y' he may be helped spiritually & temporally". Jessey also reminded them that compassion to the Polish Jews would not be forgotten by the Lord on the Day of Account"<sup>72</sup>.

"If any be inquisitive to know the success of these large Almes", Whiston adds, "whether they were brought to judge more charitably of Christians; we assure them that it much melted many of them, and indeed it hath been an incontrollable Experiment, that this kind of dealing did ever more winne over the hearts of this kind of people in the primitive Church, then all the force and arguments (since used) by moderne Christians could effect to perswade them". Violent and forceful methods would never aid in the conversion of the Jews, he thought, and indeed, "*Rabbi Nathan* himself, the *Jews* Elder and Messenger consented with divers other *Jews* to be present at a religious meeting of Christians, and hearing with what fervour and affection they prayed, said they were certainly holy men, and such as they expected their Nation should be at the coming of *Messiah*, who

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granted unto them, and the three hundred ninety Ducats relieved some of their private wants".

<sup>70</sup> This letter is printed in W[histon], *Life and Death*, pp. 72-74 and repr. in D.S. Katz, "Anonymous Advocates of the Readmission of the Jews to England", *Michael*, X (1986), pp. 117-142.

<sup>71</sup> Henry Jessey and John Dury, "To the Dispersed of *Judah* in *Jerusalem* of the *German* Synagogue", London, 22 April 1659: repr. *ibid.*; printed in W[histon], *Life and Death*, pp. 75-77. Both the letter of the Jews and this letter from Jessey and Dury are dated 22 April: this may be the result of confusion in the sources or a conscious attempt to recall the day two years later. It seems from a postscript to this letter that the money was sent in stages: first £40, then £172 enclosed with this letter, and the balance paid later.

<sup>72</sup> Jessey to Dury, 19 January 1657-1658; Jessey to Samuel Hartlib and Dury, n.d.: Sheffield Univ. Lib., Hartlib MSS. 15/8/14-15. I am indebted to Prof. R.H. Popkin for this reference and for a transcript of the MSS.

would come quickly had they such a spirit of prayer". These Jews thought so well of Christian devotions and "seeing our love to them, and hope for them would often say, *If Jesus be the Messiah, Oh that he would come! Let him come, Let him come, whoever he be!*"<sup>73</sup>. Jessey's biographer concluded that many of these Jews "seemed not far from the Kingdom of God" and noted that if this pleasant path of persuasion had been followed at the Jewish council reputedly held near Buda in 1650 to discuss the question of the Messiah, the results could have been similarly dramatic<sup>74</sup>.

The Jews of Jerusalem, however, remained uneasy about receiving money from Christians: it was not for that purpose that Rabbi Nathan Shapira was sent to Europe. Jessey and his Christian philanthropists were informed that when the truth was known, the Jews of Jerusalem intended to have Rabbi Shapira disgraced in their synagogue, until they were advised that "the supply came not by any application of the Rabbi to the Christians; but by the free offering of the Christians to help him without his craving of it". The fact that the Jews were willing to accept charity from gentiles was seen as ultimate proof of their great straits<sup>75</sup>. Years later, the moral problems of Jessey's charity had still not been resolved. An application was made to Rabbi Jacob Hagiz of Jerusalem on the issue, in which it was suggested that it was so unlikely that these "non-idolatrous gentiles" would freely help Jews, that they must be descendants of Jews who had somehow managed to evade the expulsion order of 1290. The rabbi noted that this question had been asked before, and in a proper form, and that he leaned towards the view that since the gentile money was to be used to pay off the interest on debts owed to other gentiles (the Turks) it might

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<sup>73</sup> W[histon], *Life and Death*, pp. 77-78. See also a full account of this interesting episode in [Anon.], *Information*, pp. 11-16: letter from Peter Serrarius to J[ohn] D[ury]. This letter is arguably the most important section of the entire pamphlet, but it was not printed among the other selections from this work in *Misc. Jew. Hist. Soc. Eng.*, II (1935), 99-104. The editor claimed that the "passages reproduced here comprise everything of historical interest in the little work, with the exception of the translation of a letter . . . about the coming of the Messiah". No doubt the letter from Serrarius was deliberately excised because of the pro-Christian sentiments expressed therein by Rabbi Nathan Shapira. This bowdlerized version was later translated into Hebrew in M. Ish-Shalom, *Christian Travels in the Holy Land* (Tel Aviv, 1965) (in Hebrew), pp. 354-358, which was the version used in M. Rozen, *The Jewish Community of Jerusalem in the Seventeenth Century* (Tel Aviv, 1984) (in Hebrew), pp. 91, 99-100. The suppressed letter is printed in Katz, "Anonymous Advocates". Further details appear in Homes, "Chronology", pp. 119-120.

<sup>74</sup> For more on this "Jewish Council", no doubt a fairy-tale version of the sessions of the Council of Four Lands, see Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, pp. 105-106. The story was known as early as 18 June 1652, when Moses Wall sent a copy of "the Narrative of the Jews Council near Buda" that he had promised to Samuel Hartlib: Sheffield Univ., Hartlib MS. 34/4/1: I am indebted for this to Prof. R.H. Popkin, who believes that Paul Isaiah was the source of this story.

<sup>75</sup> [Anon.], *Information*, p. 6.

be permissible to accept it. In any case, he concluded, the money had already been paid out, so there was no sense in worrying over retrospective moral qualms<sup>76</sup>.

Rabbi Nathan Shapira left Holland and returned to Jerusalem now that his mission had been successfully completed. In 1657 he signed a letter of introduction given to two rabbis who were sent as emissaries of the Ashkenazi community in Jerusalem to Italy. More importantly, at the end of 1657 he himself was sent once again to Italy, and there received from Jerusalem a copy of the famous letter by Rabbi Baruch Gad which purported to contain a message from the Lost Ten Tribes, and was used with great effect by Palestinian emissaries to Europe during this period<sup>77</sup>. Shapira may have been the "Jew from Cracovia" who convinced Serrarius that "the redemption of Israel is drawing near". Serrarius wrote of this to Hartlib, who passed the intelligence on to John Worthington in February 1662<sup>78</sup>. Rabbi Nathan Shapira died in 1666, at the height of the craze over Sabbatai Ševi, in Reggio-Amalia, where he had settled at the end of his Italian mission. His kabbalistic works and his help in disseminating the letter by Baruch Gad, were Shapira's contribution to propagating the gospel of the Jewish false Messiah<sup>79</sup>.

Henry Jessey, then, was well-acquainted in the 1650s with Raphael Supino and Nathan Shapira, later to be important figures in promoting and disseminating information in Europe about the movement of Sabbatai Ševi. He was in close contact with Fifth Monarchy men and with anglo-international millenarians John Dury, Samuel Hartlib, and Nathaniel Homes: indeed, even Morgan Lloyd the Welsh evangelist asked Jessey for an introduction to Hartlib<sup>80</sup>. Perhaps most importantly, he was in correspondence from the beginning of Nathan Shapira's mission to Holland with Peter Serrarius, that clearing-house for millenarian and

<sup>76</sup> Jacob Hagiz, *Halakhot Klanot* [Responsa] (Jerusalem, 1981) (in Hebrew & Aramaic), p. 53 = 27: first edn pub. in Venice, 1704. Jacob Hagiz (1620-1674) came to Jerusalem from Italy in 1658 and may have met Nathan Shapira there. He was also one of the first opponents of Sabbatai Ševi, and one of those who excommunicated him in 1665: see D. Ta[mar], *Ency. Jud.*, s.v. "Hagiz, Jacob".

<sup>77</sup> Ya'ari, *Emissaries*, p. 280. For more on the letter of Baruch Gad, see Katz, *Philosémisme*, pp. 141-142. Curiously, the letter appears as well in I.B. Singer, *Satan in Goray*, cap. 1.

<sup>78</sup> Hartlib to Worthington, 14 February 1661-1662: *The Diary and Correspondence of Dr. John Worthington*, ed. J. Crossley & R.C. Christie (Chetham Soc., XIII, XXXVI, CXIV, 1847-1886), II, part I, pp. 107-110. Worthington remained unconvinced: W. to H., 24 February 1661-1662: *ibid.*, pp. 111-112.

<sup>79</sup> Ya'ari, *Emissaries*, p. 280. Ya'ari notes (p. 281) that of "his private life in Jerusalem all that is known is that on the basis of the permission of a hundred rabbis he took a second wife and lived with the two women in the courtyard of the synagogue of the Sephardic community". Cf. Nathan Shapira, *Sefer Matzath Shmurim* (Venice, 1660) (in Hebrew); *idem*, *Ma'amar Yayin HaM'Shumar* (Venice, 1660) (in Hebrew).

<sup>80</sup> L. to J., July 1656: Natl. Lib. Wales MS. 11438D, letter 86.

Sabbatean intelligence, who at the height of Sabbatai Şevi's success would remember to pay his respects to "our dear Friend Mr. Jessee"<sup>81</sup>. Serrarius was the Dutch translator of Jessey's *Glory and Salvation of Iehudah and Israel*<sup>82</sup>. Serrarius wrote several letters to Sarah Wight, Jessey's "Empty Nothing Creature" whose mental disturbance was alleviated through prayer and the action of divine grace<sup>83</sup>. He also wrote to Jessey about millenarian matters after the Restoration<sup>84</sup>. Other members of Jessey's church seem to have been privy as well to information regarding Sabbatai Şevi: a long letter from Thomas Chapell to James Fitton (himself an Elder of Jessey's congregation) remains an essential source for understanding the reception of Sabbatai Şevi in Europe<sup>85</sup>.

Henry Jessey's place at what would become the center of Sabbatean agitation contrasts sharply with the "official" interpretation of Sabbatai Şevi's movement. Professor Scholem indignantly refuted the argument put forward by Graetz and others "that Sabbatai's father, Mordecai Şevi, had heard from the English merchants, whose agent he was, all sorts of rumors about the impending restoration of Israel to their land in the apocalyptic year of redemption 1666. Mordecai Şevi would report these rumors at home and create in his house a messianic atmosphere whose origin was ultimately non-Jewish". Scholem disposes of this suggestion with the following postulation:

"There is not a shred of evidence to show that Mordecai Şevi's employers were millenarians, and we may positively assert that they could not have mentioned 1666 as a messianic year. The propaganda for this date made its appearance in Dutch and English literature in the fifties only, that is, after Sabbatai had left Smyrna. There had, of course, been a few medieval writers who had interpreted the 'number of the beast,' 666, in Revelation 13:18 as a prophecy of the coming of Antichrist in the year 1666, but these isolated views were not widely known. Shortly before 1666, some Protestant chiliasts remembered the date and began to propagate the view that the 'fifth kingdom' would begin in that year".

The appearance of the movement of Jewish messianism in the year of the

<sup>81</sup> [Anon.], *Gods Love to his People Israel* (London, 1666): only known copy in library of Univ. London: repr. *Zion*, XVII (1952), pp. 169-172. Jessey is also mentioned in [Anon.], *The Wonder of all Christendom* (London, 1665): see M. McKeon, "Sabbatai Şevi in England", *Assoc. Jew. Stud. Rev.*, II (1977), n. 94.

<sup>82</sup> According to the title page, the book was "in 't Neêrlands vertaelt Door P.S.".

<sup>83</sup> Henry Jessy, *The Exceeding Riches of Grace Advanced* (7th edn, London, 1658), p. H: Jessey promises to print the letters in a new second part of the book. This reference does not appear in the 1st (1647), 3rd (1648) or 6th (1652) editions of the book.

<sup>84</sup> [Serrarius] to Jessey, 7 May 1660: White Kennett, *Register and Chronicle*, I (London, 1728), pp. 137-139.

<sup>85</sup> Capell to Fitton (at Chester), 12 July 1666: SP.29/162, fos. 157<sup>r</sup>-158<sup>v</sup>; Whitley, "Jacob-Jessey Church", pp. 251, 252; *Broadmead*, ed. Underhill, pp. 111, 203, 329, 383.

expected Christian redemption was in Scholem's eyes a mere coincidence, of the sort that does occasionally occur in history<sup>86</sup>.

Paternity disputes in intellectual history may well be among the most fruitless of academic exercises, but certainly some figures may be eliminated as probable parents. Surely Sabbatai Şevi's father is, as Scholem claims, an unlikely source of millenarian intelligence<sup>87</sup>: Graetz and the other Jewish historians who took this line did so not with the intent of casting doubt on the Şevi family's orthodoxy, but with the aim of demonstrating that the movement of Sabbatai Şevi was a momentary aberration in the smooth course of Jewish history to Enlightenment and Emancipation. They tried to prove that Sabbateanism was essentially an alien movement inconsistent with the traditional values of Judaism. Professor Scholem's central theme in his writings on this important subject is that the Sabbatean movement is the natural outgrowth of inherent kabbalistic trends and interests. This is undoubtedly true, but the Jewish kabbalah itself was one of the most important mystical traditions that the Christian millenarians sought to draw upon in their determination to pinpoint the date of the Second Coming. Their own study of Scripture revealed that the year 1666 would have a special significance, as possibly might 1656 and a number of other less popular dates.

It is simply untrue that English millenarianism was a philosophy that suddenly revived from medieval stagnation in the 1650s. While the abolition of effective press censorship during the interregnum does create a certain optical illusion of a sudden effusion of millenarian writings, many of these works were written much earlier and were widely known. The three most influential millenarian thinkers for Englishmen were Thomas Brightman (1562-1607), Joseph Mede (1586-1668) and Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588-1638). Brightman therefore was already dead when Mede was only twenty-one, and throughout the early seventeenth century one finds a continuous chain of millenarian tradition<sup>88</sup>. This in large measure explains the general acceptance of eschatological views in England during the period of the civil war: the historian of the Fifth Monarchy movement has even estimated that up to 70 per cent of the prolific ministers publishing in England during this period expressed millenarian views<sup>89</sup>.

<sup>86</sup> Scholem, *Sabbatai Şevi*, pp. 152-154.

<sup>87</sup> But we know almost nothing about Jewish contacts with English merchants and their chaplains trading from Smyrna.

<sup>88</sup> See generally, Capp, *Fifth Monarchy*; M. Vereté, "The Restoration of the Jews in English Protestant Thought, 1790-1840", *Mid. East. Stud.*, VIII (1972), pp. 3-50; P. Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon* (Toronto, 1978); K.R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain* (Oxford, 1979); and other works cited in Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, cap. 3.

<sup>89</sup> Capp, *Fifth Monarchy*, p. 38.

What is most interesting about Jessey's close contacts with Serrarius, Supino and other future European centers of the Sabbatean movement is that it illustrates the proximity of Jewish and Christian views in the middle of the seventeenth century on the timing and the characteristics of the Coming of the Messiah. It may be, as Professor Scholem insisted, that it was mere coincidence that both Christians and Jews saw these years as the era of Redemption. But it would be a striking coincidence indeed.

### III

In the later 1650s, then, in those most turbulent years of the English republic, when so many had lost faith in the Good Old Cause of the forties, Henry Jessey continued to pursue a middle line, or rather to patronize both extremes: while observing the Sabbath on Saturday he also proclaimed a moderate semi-separatist position in church government; while of millenarian views which he not only held but also acted upon, he called for restraint in opposition to unrepentant secular government. Unfortunately, here too space precludes all but an outline of Jessey's own manner of adjusting to the dramatic change in the religious and political climate after the Restoration of Charles II in May 1660. We have seen how Jessey's interest in the Jews had always been part of his passionate devotion to the millenarian scheme. Jessey had a compulsive fascination with almanacs, prophecies, and "prodigies", and indeed put out a "Scripture-Kalendar" between 1645 and his death in 1663, a sort of millenarian daily diary<sup>90</sup>. But between 1660 and 1662 he published multi-volume enumerations of examples of divine judgement against "divers Persons who have Apostatized from the Truth, and have been Persecutors of the Lord's faithful Servants"<sup>91</sup>. The publication of such works, calling to witness alleged signs of God's displeasure, was an incitement to disorder that the government could not ignore. Henry Jessey was imprisoned for much of the period between Christmas 1660 and his death, and his movements when free were carefully scrutinized<sup>92</sup>.

<sup>90</sup> The almanacs for 1656-1659 and 1662 are now missing. Jessey's Scripture Kalendar was revived later by J.S. in 1668. Wing wrongly ascribes the edition of 1645 to Henry Jessop on the basis of Thomason's extension of the printed initials H.J.: see B.S. Capp, *Astrology and the Popular Press* (London, 1979), pp. 365, 377.

<sup>91</sup> H[enry] J[essey], *The Lords Loud Call to England* (London, 1660): Wood noted on his copy, now Bod. Lib., Wood 643 (3), that this "pamphlett came out in y<sup>e</sup> middle of Aug: 1660": Jessey's full name is cited on sig. A2<sup>r</sup>, and dated 13 Aug. 1660; all anon., without notation of publisher or place: *Mirabilis Annus, Or The year of Prodigies and Wonders* (1st imp., 1661); *Mirabilis Annus Secundus; Or, The Second Year of Prodigies* (1662); *Mirabilis Annus Secundus: Or, The Second Part Of the Second Years Prodigies* (1662).

<sup>92</sup> Info. concerning Jessey, 11 September 1661 (SP. 29/4, f. 106<sup>r-v</sup>); arrest, 27 November

Jessey died on 4 September 1663 in London, and was buried three days later at a mass funeral that was itself regarded by government informers as a threat to public order. Hanserd Knollys, the father of English Baptism, preached on that occasion to 4-5,000 mourners. The same government spy who reported on the event included in his letter information about vague plans for a rising which had been supplied by the leader of the Bell Lane Saturday-Sabbatarian congregation, John Belchar, a former Fifth Monarchist<sup>93</sup>. This letter is in a sense emblematic of Jessey's work, as millenarians, sabbatarians, and Jessey himself mingle in the border area of religious radicalism which prevailed during the Interregnum and persisted after the Restoration. The precise connection between Henry Jessey and these more particular groups will probably never be known, for he was not a man who thrust himself into the public arena. Edward Whiston his biographer noted that although he differed from many of his brethren in regard to such important questions as baptism and the sabbath, he "did not urge it on them, though he had so many fair opportunities to do it; nor would he mention it unless they began, but spent the evening in more profitable discourses"<sup>94</sup>.

Like many Englishmen who admired the Jewish religion and culture, Jessey saw the obstacles for unity between Christianity and Judaism as the result of misunderstanding rather than conviction. A living religious unity rather than indifferent religious toleration in the modern sense was the aim of those who hoped to see the plight of Jews everywhere improved and the most noble of them resident in England. What was extraordinary was that Jessey, a man who carried a Hebrew Bible with him at all times, should argue that the Jews had the root of the matter in them, and should be permitted to enjoy the fruits of a better life, wherever they lived<sup>95</sup>. This was latitudinarianism of a most radical sort, and helps explain Jessey's religious compromises even during the Interregnum, when gathered congregations split apart over the most trivial of doctrinal disagreements. The fact that he put into practice his convictions regarding the Jews places him among Israel's greatest seventeenth-century benefactors.

Henry Jessey was one of those men who would have agreed emphatically with fellow Baptist John Bunyan, who after the Restoration reminded

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1661 (SP. 29/45, p. 59); exam., 8 December 1661 (SP. 29/45, fos. 48<sup>r</sup>-49<sup>v</sup>); J. to W. Howard, 10 December 1661 (SP. 29/45, fos. 56<sup>r</sup>-57<sup>v</sup>); exam. of F. Smith, 19 Dec. 1661 (SP. 29/45, f. 136<sup>r</sup>); J. to Charles II, ? December 1662 (SP. 29/65, f. 168<sup>r</sup>); info on J., 1662 (SP. 29/61, f. 270<sup>r</sup>; SP. 29/62, fos. 41<sup>r</sup>-42<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>93</sup> W[histon], *Life and Death*, pp. 84, 94; Peter Crabb to Bennet, 22 September 1663: SP. 29/80, fos. 192<sup>r</sup>-193<sup>v</sup>. The *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1663-4, pp. 277-278 has Jessey travelling to Holland, but it is clear from the original letter that the reference is to Knollys.

<sup>94</sup> W[histon], *Life and Death*, pp. 87-88.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.



the readers of *The Pilgrim's Progress* "that at the day of doom, men shall be judged according to their fruits. It will not be said then, 'Did you believe?' but, 'Were you doers, or talkers only?'"<sup>96</sup> Henry Jessey's most remarkable practical philo-Semitism, almost unique in seventeenth-century England, unmistakably places him in Bunyan's first category, along with Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel, one of early modern Jewry's most enthusiastic "doers".

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<sup>96</sup> John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (Harmondsworth, 1977), p. 115.

# MENASSEH BEN ISRAEL AND THE DUTCH SEPHARDIC COLONIZATION MOVEMENT OF THE MID-SEVENTEENTH CENTURY (1645-1657)\*

JONATHAN I. ISRAEL

Gershom Scholem attributed a fundamental role to political and social upheavals in the shaping of Jewish mysticism and spirituality. In particular, Scholem saw the expulsion from Spain, in 1492, as the impelling force behind the new forms of mystical messianism which swept the Jewish world in the late sixteenth and in the seventeenth century<sup>1</sup>. This is not to say that he regarded the changes in Jewish messianic expectations as merely sublimated responses to political, social and economic turmoil. But awareness of a complex interaction between political events on the one hand and Jewish messianic conceptions on the other permeates his entire work. And this, we may tentatively suggest, has its implications for us in our effort to grasp the essential nature of Menasseh ben Israel's perceptions of, and responses to, the major political and economic problems confronting the western Sephardic world of his day.

The expulsion from Spain, Scholem held, produced first a wave of acute expectation based on traditional messianic notions and, then, after this evaporated in disappointment, frustration, and new setbacks, in the mid-sixteenth century, a further phase of spiritual development in which final redemption came to be seen as the future outcome of a complex sequence of preparatory processes. The creative phase in the evolution of this new mystical messianism, at Safed, in the Holy Land, were the decades from 1540 to 1580. In the next decades, the messianic mysticism of Isaac Luria and his school, and related kabbalistic influences, spread inexorably through the Jewish communities first of the Ottoman Empire, then Italy and later most of the rest of the Jewish world. Then, in the middle years of

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\* I should particularly like to thank David Katz and Edgar Samuel, Director of the Jewish Museum in London, for their help with several points raised in this paper.

<sup>1</sup> See Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and other essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York, 1971): "after the expulsion from Spain, the kaballah sought to provide an answer for questions which arose from an event which had uprooted one of the principal branches of Judaism"; see also Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York, 1961), pp. 244-250.

the seventeenth century, came a dramatic intensification of these earlier tendencies, an acute messianic outburst which eventually culminated in the movement of Sabbatai Ševi.

But what precipitated this sudden rapid accumulation of messianic expectation specifically in the 1640s and 1650s? Scholem speaks of forces “impelling a Messianic outburst which, as it turned out, came approximately one generation after the reception of this kabbalah by the Judaism of the time. The movement that went forth from Safed required about three generations to gain general acceptance. But after that, one generation, fully imbued with these Messianic conceptions, was enough to create a situation in which a Messiah who seemed to fit these ideas could find a wide-ranging echo”<sup>2</sup>. In fact, Scholem seems to account for the messianic eruption of the mid-seventeenth century purely in terms of tendencies inherent in Lurianic mysticism itself. He proposes no worldly event, or events, as a frame for this new phase in the evolution of Jewish messianism.

Among Jewish messianic speculations of the mid-seventeenth century, those entered into by Menasseh ben Israel in his *Spes Israelis*, of 1650, and some subsequent writings, arguably do suggest close links between the intensifying spiritual ferment of the years around 1650 and specific political and social difficulties pressing on the Jewish people at that time. In a letter written to John Dury, in December 1649, in the midst of writing his *Spes Israelis* – or *Mikveh Israel* as he entitled the Spanish version of his tract – Menasseh explains that his purpose is to show that the “day of the promised Messiah unto us doth draw neer” by elucidating certain contemporary phenomena which he interprets as signs of pending redemption<sup>3</sup>. He tells Dury that he wants to bring out the meaning of the cruelties perpetrated by the Inquisition in Spain and Portugal, the significance of the perseverance of modern Jewry in the face of endless oppression and that of the “great honors” with which some Jews had recently been favored by a number of Christian princes. In his *Mikveh Israel*, Menasseh does indeed take up these themes, interpreting them as proofs of the imminence of redemption, of the ingathering of the Jews, and the bringing of peace to all mankind. In addition, he points also to another manifestation which, being a recent major shift, he sees as a particularly precious indication of the imminence of universal salvation. He considers it a matter of great moment that the dispersion of the Jews had recently been completed, or almost completed: “y esto se ha agora cumplido, despues que en America

<sup>2</sup> Scholem, *The Messianic Idea*, p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> See Cecil Roth, *A Life of Menasseh ben Israel, Rabbi, Printer and Diplomat* (Philadelphia, 1934), pp. 185-186.

se an instruhido synagogas’’<sup>4</sup>. Through his own personal and business connections with the Portuguese Jewish community of Dutch Brazil, and through those of his relatives and associates, Menasseh was personally involved in the spread of Jewish life to the New World and clearly invested in it immense spiritual significance.

In the *Mikveh Israel*, Menasseh balances the prolongation of Jewish suffering which he illustrates, in particular, by quoting recent examples of Jewish martyrdom at the hands of the Catholic Inquisition, against recent Jewish gains, especially the securing of new charters and concessions from a variety of European governments. The unmistakable strain of optimism which infuses this tract welds good and bad into a single system of messianic expectation. He cites “nuestra perseverancia entre tantos males” as a sign “que para grandes bienes nos tiene el Señor guardado”<sup>5</sup>. Nor is it too far-fetched to see, as implicit in Menasseh’s conception, the notion that certain programs of action – perseverance in the face of religious oppression, obtaining princely charters to secure the material framework of Jewish life, and completion of the dispersion – would facilitate, indeed accelerate, the onset of universal salvation. For this, surely, is his message in his *Vindiciae Judaearum*, of 1656, when, reflecting on his quest for Jewish readmission into England, he explains

“for seven years on this behalf I have endeavoured and solicited it, by letters and other means, without any intervall. For I conceived that our universall dispersion was a necessary circumstance, to be fulfilled, before all that shall be accomplished which the Lord hath promised to the people of the Iewes, concerning their restauration, and their returning again into their own land, according to those words *Dan.* 12.7. when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished”<sup>6</sup>.

The princely concessions which, in the vision set out in *Mikveh Israel*, offset the continuing oppression, had, of course, wrought some major changes in the life of western European Jewry over the last few decades. Through his extensive correspondence with Venice and elsewhere in Italy<sup>7</sup>, Menasseh had some knowledge of recent developments in the Jewish policy of the Italian princes and mentions in *The Humble Addresses* that he had copies of several of the recent Italian charters in his own possession,

<sup>4</sup> Menasseh ben Israel, *Mikveh Israel. Esto es, Esperança de Israel* (Amsterdam, 5410 [1650]), p. 111.

<sup>5</sup> Menasseh ben Israel, *Mikveh Israel*, p. 102.

<sup>6</sup> See the reprint of *Vindiciae Judaearum*, p. 37 in Lucien Wolf, *Menasseh ben Israel’s Mission to Oliver Cromwell* (London, 1901); Menasseh previously referred to *Daniel* chap. 12 in *Mikveh Israel*, p. 111.

<sup>7</sup> In the late 1640s, Menasseh regularly sent parcels of books, presumably mainly from his own press, to Venice; see Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague, *Levantse Handel* vol. 264, fols. 13v, 90v.

notably those granted by the Grand Dukes of Tuscany which were the most liberal of all<sup>8</sup>. Menasseh alludes several times in his writings to the privileges given in recent years to the Jews by the dukes of Tuscany, Savoy, and Modena, as well as by Venice and the king of Denmark in his port of Glückstadt<sup>9</sup>. And while, in view of the state of relations between England and Holland, it would have been impolitic to allude to the policy of the Dutch Republic toward the Jews in his *Mikveh Israel*, *Humble Addresses*, and *Vindiciae Judaeorum*, Menasseh does express fervent appreciation of Dutch policy in others of his writings<sup>10</sup>.

Menasseh's dynamic approach to the prospect of Israel's and the world's forthcoming redemption, his way of balancing recent oppression and suffering against the new political gains, might well be said to correspond, on several levels, to the political and social predicament confronting western Sephardic Jewry in the years around 1650. Indeed, I shall argue here that Menasseh ben Israel was a profoundly representative figure in the sense that his writings reverberate with, and give expression to, the basic social and political impulses which characterize the Sephardic response to the challenges of his time.

For western Sephardic Jewry, the years from 1645 down to the collapse of the Sabbatean movement, in 1666, were a time of deep crisis, disaster and turmoil offset by a simultaneous expansion in political, economic, and colonizing opportunities – assuredly a rare set of circumstances. It was without doubt a decisively formative period in the secular just as in the intellectual and spiritual history of European Jewry. And of all the phenomena which arose from the creative ferment and flux of these years, none seems to me to be more typical, or important, as a response to the crisis, than the sudden upsurge of Jewish colonizing schemes in Europe, England, the Holy Land, and the Americas.

The onset of three thoroughly unsettling and disruptive disasters began in the year 1645. But these three calamities were of a paradoxical sort which, for all the upheaval and dislocation they caused, ultimately greatly reinforced Jewish life in the west. And besides these three major setbacks, in Brazil, Spain, and Venice, a further ingredient was added by the undermining of the small Sephardic community at Glückstadt, in Holstein, in the

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<sup>8</sup> Menasseh ben Israel, *Mikveh Israel*, pp. 107-108; *The Humble Addresses*, pp. 4-5 in Wolf, *Menasseh ben Israel's Mission*; Menasseh ben Israel, *Piedra gloriosa o de la Estatua de Nebuchadnesar* (Amsterdam, 5415 [1655]), pp. 247-248.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*; on the Glückstadt charters, see Hermann Kellenbenz, *Sephardim an der unteren Elbe* (Wiesbaden, 1958), pp. 61-64.

<sup>10</sup> Menasseh ben Israel, *Piedra gloriosa*, p. 248: "Cierto no se puede encarecer la clemencia con que somos protegidos; ni el amor, afición, y fidelidad de los nuestros para con esta República"; see also *Um Discorso de Menasseh ben Israel recitado em Amsterdão em 1642*, ed. M.B..

1640s and 1650s, following the outbreak of Danish-Swedish hostilities in 1643<sup>11</sup>. The drifting of the Portuguese Jews away from Glückstadt in these years added to three wider currents of movement stemming from Brazil, Spain, and Venice. The most disruptive of the three main disasters and the one which exerted the profoundest influence on Menasseh ben Israel, his family, and immediate associates, was the rising of the Portuguese planters against Dutch rule in Netherlands Brazil. Beginning in 1645, this revolt rapidly undermined the commerce and general activity of the Jewish communities in the colony, paralyzing the life of the Sephardim of Recife and Mauricia. In the late 1630s and early 1640s, Menasseh had been much involved in trade with Dutch Brazil where his brother, Ephraim Soeiro, established himself; but, shortly after 1645, Menasseh and many other Amsterdam Sephardim who had put their money in this trade, lost their fortunes or were forced to pull out. A serious void had opened up in the economic life of Dutch Jewry. In the nine years following the revolt of 1645, Netherlands Brazil gradually crumbled, being finally liquidated with the surrender of Recife to the Portuguese in 1654.

By the late 1640s there was already a sizeable exodus of Sephardim from Brazil, as well as the new upsurge in migration from Spain, Venice and, on a smaller scale, Glückstadt. Most of the first wave returned to Holland, in spite of the narrowing of economic opportunity there as a result of the collapse of what had been the most flourishing strand in Dutch Sephardic commerce. But some of the refugees moved on, even at this early stage, to the Caribbean, including Barbados. It is usual to assert that the Bridgetown Jewish community of Barbados was established only after the final fall of Dutch Brazil, in 1654, when a sizeable group of Dutch Sephardim did arrive from Recife, including Luis Dias (Joseph Jesurun Mendes), the founder of the *Nidhe Israel* synagogue at Bridgetown<sup>12</sup>. But it seems inherently unlikely that this did mark the real beginning of the community when we consider the large scale of Sephardic emigration from Brazil before 1654 and the almost simultaneous upsurge in sugar and tobacco exports from Barbados in the late 1640s<sup>13</sup>. It seems, rather, from a variety of data, that the beginnings of the Barbados community must have been in

<sup>11</sup> Kellenbenz, *Sephardim an der unteren Elbe*, pp. 65-67.

<sup>12</sup> Cecil Roth in his entry on Barbados in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* follows Shilstone and other opinions in assigning the establishment of the Barbados community to 1654, see E.M. Shilstone, *Monumental Inscriptions in the Burial Ground of the Jewish Synagogue at Bridgetown, Barbados* (London, 1956), pp. vi, xvii, and Egon and Frieda Wolff, *A Odisséia dos judeus de Recife* (São Paulo, 1979), pp. 215-218.

<sup>13</sup> On Jews trading in "Barbados tobacco" in 1647/1648 see Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague, *Levant Handel* 264, fol. 252, where Judah Toro, of Amsterdam, is recorded as shipping 25 rolls of "Barbados tobacco" to Genoa, and Kellenbenz, *Sephardim an der unteren Elbe*, p. 162.

the late 1640s. As early as 1647/1648, both Amsterdam and Hamburg Sephardim were re-exporting "Barbados tobacco" as far afield as Italy and, by 1651, there were certainly quite a number of Hamburg (and almost certainly also) Amsterdam Sephardim who were shipping merchandise to Barbados<sup>14</sup>. Two De Cáceres brothers, Simon Enrique and Benjamin, interestingly enough from Glückstadt, were certified by the English governor, in October 1653, as being "inhabitants of this island of Barbados and have a plantation, as also a storehouse at . . . Bridge towne" which implies that they must have been there for some time before that date<sup>15</sup>. Meanwhile, as a result of the exodus from Brazil – only sporadically, as yet, to the Caribbean, but on a much larger scale to Amsterdam – there was a rapid fall in the Jewish population of Dutch Brazil well before 1654. From a peak of around 1,500, in 1645, the Sephardic population of Dutch Brazil was down to only around 650 as early as 1650<sup>16</sup>. Only a much reduced rump of the former community was still in Brazil at the time of the surrender, in 1654. These too then departed and again mainly for Holland and the Caribbean.

The two other major calamities which befell western Sephardic Jewry in the mid-1640s were the sudden backlash against the Portuguese New Christians in Spain, following the downfall of the Conde-Duque de Olivares, and the outbreak of the War of Candia (1645-1669) between Venice and Ottoman Turkey. The upsurge in Inquisition persecution of the Marranos in Madrid and Seville in the mid-1640s, coupled with the effects of the 1647 financial crash in Madrid (which was deliberately handled by Spanish ministers so as to disrupt the activity of the Portuguese bankers of Madrid and Antwerp), led to a major exodus from Spain and Antwerp beginning in, or around, 1645 and continuing down to the 1660s<sup>17</sup>. Several thousand refugees, including some of the richest personages in Spain and Antwerp, men such as Thomas Rodríguez (Abraham) Pereyra, Salvador Vaez Martínez, Diogo Teixeira (Abraham Senior), Gil Lopes (Abraham de) Pinto, Antonio (Isaac) Lopes Suasso and members of the Pasarinho family, migrated chiefly to Amsterdam, Livorno, and Hamburg but also to Rouen, Bordeaux, Nice, London, Rotterdam, and the Caribbean.

<sup>14</sup> In July 1651, Gaspar Gomes, Duarte Esteves de Pina, Manoel Rodrigues and Manoel de Pina, all Hamburg Sephardim, shipped linen, French wine and brandy, olive oil and whale oil to Barbados, Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Admiralitätskollegium F4/15, fol. 94.

<sup>15</sup> Wilfred S. Samuel, "Review of the Jewish Colonists in Barbados, 1680", *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, XIII (1936), p. 18.

<sup>16</sup> A. Wiznitzer, "The Number of Jews in Dutch Brazil, 1630-1654", *Jewish Social Studies*, XVI (1954), pp. 107-114.

<sup>17</sup> Matías de Novoa, *Historia de Felipe IV, Rey de España*, III: *Colección de documentos inéditos para la historia de España* (112 vols., Madrid, 1842-1895), LXXXVI, p. 365; Jonathan I. Israel, "Spain and the Dutch Sephardim, 1609-1660", *Studia Rosenthaliana*, XII (1978), pp. 46-49.

Among the newcomers from Spain were most of the wealthiest patricians, as well as some of the most creative intellectually of the western Sephardic diaspora of the second half of the seventeenth century, men such as the brothers Abraham and Isaac Cardoso, Daniel Levi de Barrios, Isaac Orobio de Castro, and many others.

The influx from Spain boosted the population of the Sephardic diaspora in western Europe, enhanced its colonizing potential, and greatly expanded its wealth and trade connections, especially with Spain and Spanish America; but it also intensified the quest for answers to the problem of Jewish exile and suffering, imparting new momentum to the study groups and pious fraternities of Holland and Italy as well as to the establishment of new synagogues, *yeshivoth* and charitable institutions. Abraham Pereyra who arrived in Amsterdam from Madrid, via Venice, in the mid-1640s, brought an immense fortune and had important trading connections with Spain as well as the Caribbean, but he also established two *yeshivoth* in Amsterdam, supported Menasseh ben Israel, making him head of the first of these institutions, sent large sums to the Holy Land where, in 1659, he established the *yeshivah Hesed-le-Avraham*, at Hebron, and immersed himself in pious and mystical speculation, later throwing himself wholeheartedly into the Sabbatean frenzy<sup>18</sup>.

Intermingling with the double influx from Brazil and Spain, in the late 1640s and 1650s, came also a third influx, from Venice. Both the Portuguese and the Balkan Spanish (or so-called "Levantine") communities of Venice had functioned economically as intermediaries between the western Sephardic diaspora and the Levant. Since the 1590s they had been especially prominent in the commerce through the Dalmatian ports of Split and Valona, and the overland routes from these centers, to Constantinople and Salonika. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that, in the early seventeenth century, Venetian Jews, using these internal routes, dominated the supply of western products passing via Venice to Constantinople and Salonika<sup>19</sup>. The outbreak of war between Venice and Turkey, in 1645, paralyzed the overland trade across the Balkans which, in turn, undermined the entire position of the Venetian Sephardim. The Jewish communities of Venice received a blow from which they were never fully to recover, even though they did regain some of the lost ground after 1670.

<sup>18</sup> "Vieirão Vs. Ms. de Espanha", wrote Menasseh of the Pereyra brothers, "e avendo tirado hũa tão consideravel riqueza, lhes pareceo, que esta seria tanto mais acreditada e nobre, quanto mais empregada em bons usos. Instituem Vs. Ms. logo hũa ilustre iessiva, e com muytos salarios a enriquecem de Baale Tora", Menasseh ben Israel, *Thesouro dos Dinim que o povo de Israel he obrigado saber e observar* (Amsterdam, 1643-1647), dedication to the final section.

<sup>19</sup> Renzo Paci, *La "Scala" di Spalato e il commercio veneziano nei Balcani fra cinque e seicento* (Venice, 1971), pp. 111-112.



A double movement now seems to have set in with sizeable numbers of Jews streaming into Venice from Split and other Venetian colonies, such as Zante and Corfu, and many others migrating from Venice, chiefly to Livorno but also to Holland, Hamburg and the Caribbean<sup>20</sup>.

There was, in the established Sephardic communities of Holland, north-west Germany and north-west Italy, some scope for absorbing the sudden post-1645 upsurge in immigration from Brazil, Spain and Venice. The Jewish economy of Amsterdam, Hamburg and Livorno did dramatically expand at this very time and essentially owing to the influx of people and capital<sup>21</sup>. There was a particularly sharp increase in Jewish population at Livorno where the Portuguese community rose from about 1,000, in 1640, to some 3,000 by 1665<sup>22</sup>. But capacity for absorption in these centers was, nevertheless, severely limited owing to the excessively narrow frame of opportunities permitted by the Christian authorities. At Hamburg, the rules imposed by the Senate excluded the Jews from practically every form of activity other than overseas trade, even sugar-refining, a sector in which they had particular expertise<sup>23</sup>. Even at Amsterdam, guild restrictions excluded Jews from most crafts and forms of shop-keeping and those crafts they were allowed to practice, such as diamond-processing, tobacco-spinning, and chocolate-making, were, generally speaking, closely connected with colonial trade. Thus, even those who were successfully absorbed in the old centers could be taken in only because of the rapid spread in Sephardic activity at this time across the oceans and especially to the Caribbean.

For these reasons it seems legitimate to interpret the Jewish colonization movement of the 1650s, emanating from Amsterdam, Hamburg and Livorno, as essentially a response to the problem of surplus Sephardic population which could not be absorbed within the confines of the existing, albeit expanding, Jewish economy in Holland and Italy. But the movement was not only that. It was also a crucial element in the restructuring of the western Sephardic economy following the collapse of Dutch

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<sup>20</sup> The comparatively large numbers of brides and bridegrooms of Venetian Sephardic origin marrying in Amsterdam between 1660 and 1690 doubtlessly reflects the migration of the 1640s and 1650s, see Daniel Swetschinski, "The Portuguese Jewish Merchants of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam: A Social Profile" (unpublished Brandeis Ph.D. Dissertation, 1979), pp. i, 80, 117-118; Swetschinski states that the "Italian immigration accelerated in the 1650s and cannot be attributed to a single, apparent factor" - I agree with the first part of this but not the second.

<sup>21</sup> Jonathan I. Israel, "The Economic Contribution of Dutch Sephardi Jewry to Holland's Golden Age, 1595-1713", *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, XCVI (1983), pp. 525-528.

<sup>22</sup> Alfredo Toaff, "Cenni storici sulla comunità ebraica e sulla sinagoga di Livorno", *La Rassegna Mensile di Israel*, XXI (1955), pp. 361, 368.

<sup>23</sup> Staatsarchiv, Hamburg, Jüdische Gemeinden 993/ip. 88 resolution of the *Mahamad* of 16 Adar 5417.

Brazil, the exodus from Spain, and the paralyzing of Venetian trade with the Balkans. For if Dutch and Italian Sephardic Jewry were successfully to meet the challenge of the 1650s and take advantage of the new opportunities in international trade – above all the restoration of peace between Holland and Spain and the rise of the sugar plantations in the Caribbean – the launching of a colonization program, especially one directed towards the Americas, England, and those parts of north Italy where there were possibilities for new Jewish settlement, was essential. For a variety of reasons, connected especially with the Portugal trade and Barbados, England was important to western Sephardic Jewry from 1645 onwards in ways that it had never been before.

It is evident that the main impetus behind the Sephardic colonization movement of the 1650s emanated from Holland. Moreover, in the long run Amsterdam remained the hub of the western Sephardic commercial network. Yet it was inherent in the situation which now confronted Dutch Sephardic Jewry that its elected, formal leadership, the Amsterdam *Mahamad*, could not play a fully active part in organizing the colonizing projects. For, at this juncture, there were relatively few prospects for colonization within the Dutch colonial empire itself and the Dutch state, to which Dutch Jewry was bound to defer, would scarcely look favorably on approaches even to France and the Italian states, let alone to Holland's enemy, England. Even the formation of daughter communities within the Low Countries was apt to be looked on with disapproval by the Amsterdam burgomasters. Thus, with regard to England and the English Caribbean, the Portuguese Jewish community in Holland were caught in a sort of trap. As Dutch-Portuguese conflict in Brazil, West Africa and India intensified, relations between Holland and Portugal steadily deteriorated, culminating in open war between these two powers in the years 1657-1661. It was England that profited from this, extracting trade concessions from the Portuguese crown which placed the English in a position of unrivalled supremacy over the Portuguese market which, at this time, was still of great importance to Dutch Sephardic Jewry. All at once England had become a vital factor in the Portugal trade and a no less vital factor in the Caribbean.

The colonizing initiatives of the 1650s thus evolved with an intricate framework of political pressures and influences. On the one hand, there was some, though inadequate, scope for Jewish settlement in the Dutch colonies in the Americas. Several enterprising personalities, recently forced out of the Brazil trade, men such as João de Yllan<sup>24</sup>, Abraham

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<sup>24</sup> João de Yllan secured his 1651 charter for Jewish settlement on Curaçao with the help of his influential father-in-law, Dr. Jacob Bueno; in February 1666 Yllan, then a fervent

Drago<sup>25</sup>, and, most notable of all, David Nassi<sup>26</sup> (Joseph Nunes da Fonseca), sought and obtained charters from the Dutch West India Company, and other bodies, for settlement in the Dutch dependencies. At first, De Yllan, Drago and Nassi were most interested in Curaçao. But Curaçao in the 1650s did not yet play that highly important role in the transit trade between Holland and the Spanish Indies which it was destined to fulfill from the early 1660s onwards and, despite the determined efforts of the first Sephardic colonists (who gave this community the redolent name *Mikveh Israel*), in the first few years the Jewish colony on the island was small and not very flourishing. Nor is this surprising; for Curaçao was a largely barren island, little suited to compete with Barbados and Martinique as a plantation colony. De Yllan's and Nassi's plans for establishing a Jewish agricultural community on Curaçao were doomed to failure. When a flourishing Sephardic community on Curaçao did arise, in the 1660s, its success and vitality derived wholly from its pivotal role in the transit traffic to the Spanish Caribbean colonies<sup>27</sup>.

The failed early initiatives on Curaçao, which predate the final collapse of Dutch Brazil, were soon followed by new efforts directed towards other Dutch colonies. A fledgling Dutch Sephardic community was consolidated at New Amsterdam (later New York) through the intervention of the Amsterdam *Mahamad* with the West India Company directors, despite the opposition of the Dutch governor on the spot, Pieter Stuyvesant. Again the group consisted mainly of refugees from Brazil. In the autumn of 1657, David Nassi and a group of Brazilian exiles temporarily resident in Middelburg negotiated a highly favorable colonizing contract with the States of Zeeland committee which was then governing the colony of Nova Zeelandia (Essequibo), in western Guyana<sup>28</sup>. To promote this project and attract additional colonists, printed copies of the terms were sent to the Sephardic congregation at Livorno. As a result, an at first relatively flourishing Jewish colony was established at Essequibo, and also along the Pomeroon river, most of the community being involved in the cultivation of sugar<sup>29</sup>. Aside from Curaçao, where Sephardic life began to develop rapidly from 1659, this was the most successful of the Jewish colonies on

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adherent of Sabbatai Şevi, petitioned Charles II of England for a safe-conduct to enable him to ship fifty Jewish families to the Holy Land, I.S. and S.A. Emmanuel, *History of the Jews of the Netherlands Antilles* (2 vols., Cincinnati, 1970), I, pp. 40-42.

<sup>25</sup> Drago had abandoned substantial property in Brazil, see Wolff, *A Odisséia*, p. 30.

<sup>26</sup> Nassi was likewise a veteran of the tropics, having lived some years in Brazil and lost property there, Emmanuel, *History*, I, pp. 43-44.

<sup>27</sup> Israel, "Economic Contribution", pp. 527-528.

<sup>28</sup> Robert Cohen, "The Egerton Manuscript", *American Jewish History*, LXII (1973), pp. 339-340.

<sup>29</sup> On the Sephardi colonization of Nova Zeelandia, see S. Oppenheim, "An Early

Dutch territory from 1658 until 1665 when English forces sent from Barbados occupied and ravaged Essequibo as well as Pomaroon and Berbice, destroying the sugar plantations and scattering many of the Jews, at least some of whom they removed to the then still English colony of Surinam. Meanwhile, with Sephardic life established in the western part of the Guyanas, David Nassi obtained another highly favorable charter, this time again from the West India Company, to colonize both the island and mainland of Cayenne which was then also under Dutch rule<sup>30</sup>. In this case, not only were the Italian Sephardic communities involved in the colonizing project, but it seems that most of the Jewish colonists who now settled at Remire, devoting themselves to the cultivation of sugar, were shipped out, via Holland, from Livorno<sup>31</sup>. After the French captured Cayenne from the Dutch, in 1664, this group stayed on at first, at Remire, but when the English ravaged the area shortly after, during the second Anglo-Dutch War (1665-1667) most of them removed to what, for the time being, was still the English colony of Surinam. However, in the last stages of the second Anglo-Dutch War, a Zeeland squadron, under Crijnsen, forced the surrender of the English at Paramaribo, and throughout Surinam, and, under the Peace of Breda (1667), Surinam was assigned to the Dutch Republic, together with Essequibo and Pomaroon. The Jewish settlers in the Guyanas had come full circle and were now again all under Dutch rule.

But successful Sephardic colonization in the Guyanas, as on Curaçao, began only at the end of the 1650s. Before 1658, as far as the Sephardic Jewish community of Amsterdam was concerned, much the most important plantation colony in the Caribbean, owing to its pre-eminence at that stage in the production and exporting to Europe of sugar, was Barbados. And Barbados was English. Jewish settlement on Barbados had inevitably to be a question of veiled direction from Amsterdam, and to a lesser extent Hamburg, seemingly initiated from London. This was essential if the cooperation of Cromwell's government was to be won while avoiding adverse repercussions in the Republic itself. The Barbados Sephardic colony, as we have seen, originated in the late 1640s; it was much expanded by the influx of refugees from Brazil, in 1654, and then by further waves of immigration from Holland. Thus, the great bulk of the Barbados Sephardic community in this early period consisted of Dutch Jews, their economic as well as their social and cultural ties being with Amsterdam and not Lon-

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Jewish Colony in Western Guiana, 1658-1666", *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, XVI (1907), pp. 95-186 and XVII (1909), pp. 53-70.

<sup>30</sup> Zvi Loker, "Cayenne - A Chapter in the Jewish Settlement of the New World in the Seventeenth Century", *Zion*, XLVIII (1983) (in Hebrew), pp. 106-117.

<sup>31</sup> According to Daniel Levi de Barrios, 152 Sephardim emigrated to Cayenne from Livorno in 1660.

don. Nevertheless, in order to circumvent the English *Navigation Act* of 1651, one of the main purposes of which was to eliminate trade between Holland and the English colonies, the existence of a Sephardic community in London, however small and precarious, was indispensable to the Barbados-Amsterdam connection which had to be dressed up as "English". Officially, the Barbados Sephardim, after 1651, were agents of London Marranos and (after 1655) Jews, though their basic function was to sell Dutch goods on Barbados and export sugar and tobacco to Holland<sup>32</sup>. In 1657, an Irish privateer in Spanish service – Spain and England were at war in the years 1655-1660 – brought in to San Sebastian what purported to be an English vessel, *The Pearl*, carrying twenty-seven Dutch Jewish emigrants on their way to settle in Barbados, taking with them merchandise which eventually turned out to belong to Amsterdam Sephardic merchants which was valued at £120,000, an immense sum for the time. The Spanish admiralty authorities were utterly baffled as to whether the ship and its contents were English or Dutch, finding that the Jews had official papers and passes from both London and Amsterdam<sup>33</sup>. This incident forced the *Mahamad* in Amsterdam to come into the open as the true guardian and protector of the Barbadian community, assuring the Spanish crown, through the States General, that everything on board *the Pearl* was in reality Dutch. It was this intervention by the Sephardic Jewish leadership in Amsterdam which led to the States General's famous resolution, of 17 July 1657, to the effect that "those of the Jewish nation who live in these provinces [*i.e.*, the United Provinces] are true subjects and inhabitants of these provinces and must enjoy the conditions, rights, and privileges stipulated in the treaties of peace and commerce"<sup>34</sup>.

Meanwhile, there was some Sephardic settlement in other parts of the Caribbean. The first Jewish settlers in the then English colony of Surinam, refugees from Brazil, arrived as early as 1652. Others settled in Jamaica, after the English conquered the island in 1655, Tobago, Nevis, and other islands. One group of Dutch Jews from Brazil arrived, in 1654, at the French island of Martinique. It is not known whether or not there was any kind of intervention by the Dutch Sephardic leadership at Amsterdam, with the French crown to secure the freedom of practice of their religion which this group were now granted. What is clear is that while Mazarin allowed the Jews on Martinique far more religious freedom than was then enjoyed by their fellow Sephardim at Bayonne and Bordeaux, many of Martinique Jewry's social, cultural and economic ties were, once again,

<sup>32</sup> V.T. Harlow, *A History of Barbados, 1625-1685* (Cambridge, 1926), pp. 263-264.

<sup>33</sup> Israel, "Spain and the Dutch Sephardim", p. 38.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

with Holland. Much, if not most, of the sugar and tobacco the Sephardim of Martinique shipped back to Europe was destined for Amsterdam and not for France<sup>35</sup>.

At the same time, Sephardim from Holland and from Dutch Brazil participated along with exiles from Spain and migrants from Venice and the Adriatic in building up the new Sephardic colonies in Italy. If Tuscany offered the most liberal terms and its main port, Livorno, absorbed the lion's share of the influx, other Italian states took steps, out of mercantilist motives, to syphon off at least part of the flow. At Nice, where Duke Carlo Emmanuele II of Savoy had declared a free port, open to Jews as well as others, in 1648, invitations to Sephardic groups were issued through the duke's "Court Jew", Isaac Avigdor. Of those who arrived and set up businesses at Nice in the 1650s several are known to have been Dutch, or from Dutch Brazil, and it seems likely that at least one or two were among those Sephardim who left London, in 1656, after the apparent failure of Menasseh ben Israel's mission<sup>36</sup>. The Este duke of Modena issued three charters in 1652-1653, just before Menasseh's mission to England. These privileges which styled the Sephardic immigrants "wealthy people and very apt to introduce traffic and commerce", succeeded in attracting a substantial immigration from all sides. There survives a list of sixty Sephardic families who settled in Modena and especially Regio – a community which Menasseh mentions in his *Humble Addresses* – within just five years down to 1657. Most of these immigrants were from Venice, or else newly arrived Marranos from Spain who had recently converted to open Judaism in Tuscany. But no less than nine families are stated as having migrated from Amsterdam or Hamburg<sup>37</sup>.

Alongside the colonization movements in the Caribbean and Italy, there developed a surge of initiatives to widen the framework of Sephardic life within the Netherlands itself. Attempts were made to persuade the towns of Deventer and Zwolle to allow Jewish settlement, in 1654 and 1657, but both failed. However, a substantial group of refugees from Brazil did win permission to settle, and practice Judaism, at Middelburg and new Sephardic communities were established in the 1650s at Amersfoort and Nijkerk<sup>38</sup>. Other Sephardim, from Madrid, Antwerp and Brazil, settled

<sup>35</sup> Gemeentearchief Amsterdam NA 2898, pp. 185, 197 and NA 2901, deeds of 3 and 11 March 1670; I.S. Emmanuel, "Les juifs de la Martinique et leurs coreligionnaires d'Amsterdam", *Revue des Etudes Juives*, CXXIII (1964), pp. 511-516.

<sup>36</sup> Salvatore Foa, *La politica economica della casa savoia verso gli ebrei. Il portofranco di Villafranca (Nizza)* (Rome, 1961), pp. 52-55.

<sup>37</sup> A. Balletti, *Gli Ebrei e gli Estensi* (Modena, 1913), pp. 223-224.

<sup>38</sup> J.H. van 't Hoff, "De vroegere Portugeesch-Joodsche gemeente en de kerkeraad der hervormde gemeente te Middelburg", *Archief uitgegeven door het Zeeuwisch Genootschap der*

in Rotterdam. Especially intriguing, late in 1653, just two years before the Whitehall Conference in London, a government committee was formed in Brussels to consider whether to admit Dutch Jews to the Spanish Netherlands. Lopo Ramires (David Curiel), a wealthy Amsterdam merchant and financier, and a group of other Dutch Sephardim had made a proposal to the then governor of the Spanish Netherlands, the Archduke Leopold, through the Spanish ambassador at The Hague. In this case we know that it was a private initiative by disaffected Jews and that the Amsterdam *Mahamad* was not involved. Lopo Ramires and his associates were offering cash to the hard-pressed Spanish Netherlands treasury, in return for permission to establish an organized Jewish ghetto in the Antwerp suburb of Borgerhout<sup>39</sup>. Leopold himself, hard-pressed for cash, seems to have been in favor and the committee which he set up, headed by the Archbishop of Mechelen, could see no specific legal obstacle to the readmission of the Jews to the province of Brabant. The proceedings were only stopped when the Pope and the king of Spain learnt what was going on. The Papacy was determined that Judaism should not be permitted in the Spanish Netherlands and pressed the Spanish monarch to act quickly to stop the negotiations. Even so, Ramires and some relatives were given permission by the archduke to settle in Antwerp with personal privileges and immunities which amounted to a government license to practice Judaism in private<sup>40</sup>.

But the colonizing project with which Menasseh personally was most closely involved was of course the enterprise of England which, as we have seen, became a major priority for Dutch Sephardic Jewry in the early and mid-1650s in a way that it had never been before. Nor (though Anglo-Jewish historians, starting with Lucien Wolf, have tended to de-emphasize this), can there be any doubt that it was essentially a Dutch initiative<sup>41</sup>. We tend to look back on Menasseh's mission to London as a partial, or at least an eventual success. But at the time, the inconclusive outcome of the Whitehall Conference, followed by Cromwell's decision not, after all, to issue a public announcement in favor of the Jews (as had been widely expected, not least by the Tuscan ambassador who closely scrutinized the proceedings) was a bitter disappointment to Menasseh personally and to a considerable number of other Dutch and Dutch Brazilian Jews, not only

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*Wetenschappen* (1922), pp. 16-21; Carolus Reijnders, *Van "Joodsche Natiën" tot joodse Nederlanders* (Amsterdam, 1970), pp. 139-140, 157.

<sup>39</sup> Archivo General de Simancas, consulta de estado 7 Feb. 1654.

<sup>40</sup> Gemeentearchief Amsterdam NA 2242A, fol. 14; E. Ouverleaux, *Notes et documents sur les Juifs de Belgique sous l'Ancien Régime* (Brussels, 1885), pp. 29, 38-41; Israel, "Spain and the Dutch Sephardim", pp. 34-35.

<sup>41</sup> A point recently made in Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, "Between Amsterdam and New Amsterdam: The Place of Curaçao and the Caribbean in Early Modern Jewish History", *American Jewish History*, LXXII (1982), p. 180.

in the Netherlands, but with him in London. Recounting his disillusionment, at the end of the *Vindiciae Judaearum*, composed at his lodgings, in The Strand, in April 1656, Menasseh wrote that

“those few Jewes that were here, despairing of our expected success, departed hence. And others who desired to come hither, have quitted their hopes, and betaken themselves to Italy, some to Geneva [Genova?], where that Commonwealth hath at this time, most freely granted that many, and great privileges”<sup>42</sup>

Few of the exiled and uprooted Sephardim in Holland, and western Europe generally, found their way to England in the late 1650s, despite Cromwell's behind-the-scenes assurances that Jews living in London would continue to be permitted to practice Judaism, in the privacy of their homes, as had been allowed for several years before 1655. Substantially larger numbers of Jewish settlers migrated to the Caribbean or, as Menasseh says, to Italy. He himself migrated to Middelburg. Nevertheless, a few stayed on in England, and gradually a few more joined them, so that, from 1655, the London Sephardic community did indeed come to serve a crucial function within the wider framework of western Sephardic life, especially as an intermediary between Amsterdam and the English colonies.

The essential paradox of the readmission of the Jews into England, therefore, is that it was essentially a Dutch and Dutch Brazilian initiative but one where, at the same time, the Dutch origins of the initiative had to be systematically veiled for political reasons. Until the death of the strongly pro-Stuart Stadholder William II, in November 1650, the States General refused to recognize the legitimacy of the regime in London and there could be no question of the Amsterdam Sephardic community openly cultivating Parliament's envoys. There was a short-lived improvement in Anglo-Dutch relations after William's demise, however, and early in 1651 an English delegation arrived at The Hague to negotiate an alliance. During a visit to Amsterdam, the envoys also visited the Portuguese Jewish community and its synagogue. They evidently received an elaborate welcome and, as Menasseh tells us, a formal blessing was pronounced upon the Commonwealth of England, responses which could have been decided on only after careful deliberation by the *Mahamad*. We also know that John Thurloe, a key figure in the management of England's foreign relations under the Commonwealth, had several interviews with Menasseh at that time and presumably discussed with him the possibility of the readmission

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<sup>42</sup> Menasseh ben Israel, *Vindiciae Judaearum*, printed in Wolf, *Menasseh ben Israel's Mission*, pp. 144-145; clearly Menasseh did not mean Geneva where there were then no Jews; Cecil Roth took this as a reference to Genoa, though it seems more likely that Menasseh would have had Livorno, Nice or Modena in mind.



of the Jews into England. Menasseh was sufficiently encouraged to submit a petition calling for readmission to the English Parliament and this was taken up with at least some show of interest by the English Council of State. However, by this time Anglo-Dutch relations were rapidly deteriorating once again, following the collapse of the negotiations in The Hague and the passing of the Navigation Act by Parliament in October. This measure was largely aimed at weakening Dutch commerce and brought the two countries to the brink of war. The Council of State eventually issued a safe-conduct for Menasseh to come to London, in November 1652, after the first Anglo-Dutch war had begun, but by then it was out of the question for Dutch Sephardic Jewry to be seen to be having any formal dealings with the English government. Menasseh was again in contact with the Parliamentary authorities in the autumn of 1653 and another safe-conduct was issued, but again, as Menasseh explains in his *Vindiciae Judaearum*, he was persuaded not to go “my kindred and friends, considering the chequered and interwoven vicissitudes, and terms of things here below, embracing me, with pressing importunity, earnestly requested me not to part from them . . .”<sup>43</sup>.

The next stage in the proceedings centered not around Menasseh himself but around an associate of his, a former *parnas* of the Amsterdam Sephardic community and an influential figure in the western Sephardic world<sup>44</sup>, Manuel Martínez (David Abrabanel) Dormido. Some months after the Anglo-Dutch War ended, Martínez Dormido, whom I take to have been a relative of Menasseh’s wife, Rachel Abrabanel<sup>45</sup>; arrived in London together with Menasseh’s son, Samuel Soeiro, partly in the hope of restoring his own recently reduced fortune but also with wider projects in mind which we know he had discussed with David Nassi and which he must also have discussed with Menasseh’s son and, presumably, with Menasseh himself. Martínez Dormido prepared the way for Menasseh and was the first to petition Lord Protector Cromwell as distinct from Parliament for the readmission of the Jews into England. Martínez Dormido was, in fact, one of the architects of the resettlement of the Jews

<sup>43</sup> Roth, *A Life of Menasseh ben Israel*, pp. 211-212.

<sup>44</sup> “David Abrabanel Dormido” is listed as a *parnas* of the Amsterdam *Mahamad* for 1645 and the previous year was a member of the governing board of the Amsterdam *yeshiva Ets Haim*; he was one of the *parnasim* to whom Menasseh dedicated his *Thesouro dos Dinim*, Gemeentearchief Amsterdam, archives of the Portuguese Jewish community no. 1323, “Registro dos parnasim”, anno 5405; Jaap Meijer, *Encyclopaedia Sefardica Neerlandica* (Amsterdam, 1949), p. 103.

<sup>45</sup> Cecil Roth, however, points out that there is no evidence for Lucien Wolf’s contention that he was Menasseh’s brother-in-law or that he was a relative at all, Roth, *A Life of Menasseh ben Israel*, p. 337.

in England, just as he was later one of the most active founders of the London Sephardic synagogue and one of its first two *parnasim*<sup>46</sup>.

Although Martínez Dormido seems never to have set foot in the Americas, he was, in several respects, thoroughly representative of the mid-seventeenth-century crisis in western Sephardic life. Born to a family of Portuguese New Christians in Andalusia where he was brought up and became a financier of some standing, he was forced to flee from the Inquisition in or around 1632. After some years as a judaizing New Christian living at Bordeaux, he moved to Amsterdam in April 1640, where he reverted to open Judaism and where he soon established himself as one of the élite of the Sephardic community. During 1641, when Dutch power in Brazil was at its height, he sent two sons to Recife with "great cargazons of goods of which proseedes I did looke for above 500 chests of suggars which they had to send me in the yeare 1646". "It happened", however, "that the Portugalls and dwellers in the country of Pernambuco (Recife) did rize, amongst whom were my debtors and the possessors of my estate"<sup>47</sup>. He later claimed to have lost over 150,000 guilders in Brazil, being owed 80,000 guilders by three Portuguese planters of the Recife hinterland alone. Wiped out commercially, Martínez Dormido remained at first in Amsterdam, despite an "extremity of miseries and necessities" which he concealed from those that knew him as best he could "as I owe to my quality and to that honour wherewith I was borne and bred and ever did observe". During the first Anglo-Dutch War he seems to have passed intelligence from Amsterdam to London and, in this way, gained the standing with the English authorities which enabled him to settle in London, after the war, as an openly proclaimed Jew and to request Cromwell's help in petitioning King John IV of Portugal for compensation for the fortune he had lost in Brazil. In his petitions to Cromwell of November 1654 he declared himself "of the Hebrew nation" and at the same time a "loyall subiect of Your Highnesse (Cromwell) and this most noble Commonwealth"<sup>48</sup>. Stripped of their business and property, Martínez Dormido's sons, Selomoh and Aron Abrabanel Dormido, returned from Brazil to Holland, along with hundreds of other Dutch Brazilian Jews, and, then, also came over from Amsterdam to London, either late in 1654 or, in any case, before the arrival of Menasseh ben Israel in the autumn of 1655<sup>49</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> *El Libro de los Acuerdos, being the Records and Accompts of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue of London from 1663 to 1681*, ed. L.D. Barnett (Oxford, 1931), pp. 2, 14-17.

<sup>47</sup> Lucien Wolf, "American Elements in the Re-Settlement", *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, III, p. 91.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92; see also Public Record Office, London, S.P. 84/160 (Holland), fol. 92.

<sup>49</sup> Their names appear in their father's petition for denization, in 1661, in which it is stated that they had been living in London for seven years, *Cal. State Papers. Domestic, 1661-1662*, p. 214; see also Wolff, *A Odissia*, p. 166.

Together with the petition relating to his personal affairs, Martínez Dormido submitted to Cromwell his petition on behalf of the Jews generally, asking the Lord Protector to re-admit them into England, "granting them liberties to come with their families and estates, to be dwellers here with the same eaquellnesse and conveniences which your inland subjects doe enjoy". Cromwell referred both petitions to the Council of State for its views<sup>50</sup>. The private petition was eventually received favorably and, some months later, Cromwell did indeed send a letter to King John IV of Portugal on Martínez Dormido's behalf<sup>51</sup>. The Council reacted more negatively to the general petition, though, judging that readmission of the Jews would be "against the establish'd law"<sup>52</sup>. Martínez Dormido's response to this unfavorable decision, his renewed appeal to Cromwell and his manner of pressing on with his campaign have a rather special significance within the wider context of the mid-seventeenth-century western Sephardic colonization movement and Menasseh's role in it. For Martínez Dormido now tried to win official approval and support for his efforts in England, on behalf of the "nation" generally, from the Sephardic leadership in Holland. And it is the reactions of the latter, in the same month, November 1654, to Martínez Dormido's representations, which show us, more clearly perhaps than any other evidence, the full scope of the dilemma which now confronted Dutch Sephardic Jewry in its relations with England and the true nature of the Jewish pressure to secure readmission to that country.

Martínez Dormido sent his appeal to the Amsterdam *Mahamad* through his confidant, David Nassi, whom he asked to intercede for him. That David Nassi was privy to the project to secure a charter for readmission and Jewish "rights" in England, through Cromwell, and agreed to liaise on Martínez Dormido's behalf with the *parnasim* in Amsterdam, shows us that this, the most notable of all the mid-seventeenth-century Portuguese Jewish colonizers, was not just a prolific forger of schemes for Sephardic settlement in the Caribbean, but was also acutely aware of the new-found relevance of England to the wider situation and was, in some measure, involved in the efforts to secure Sephardic settlement there also. No doubt his perception of the new significance of England for the western Sephardic world was also partly shaped by the first Anglo-Dutch War which temporarily paralyzed Dutch and Dutch Jewish trade and seems to have been the factor which prevented him from implementing his plan to lead a colo-

<sup>50</sup> The two petitions, submitted on 3 November, were referred by Cromwell to the Council "to report" on 8 November 1654, *Cal. State Papers. Domestic, 1654*, p. 393.

<sup>51</sup> Wolf, "American Elements", p. 92.

<sup>52</sup> See again Public Record Office, London, S.P. 84/160, fol. 92.

nizing expedition to Curaçao in 1652-1653<sup>53</sup>. Though he was still some years off from obtaining his charters for the settlement of Jewish colonists in Essequibo and Cayenne, we may infer that it was the Caribbean implications of establishing a Sephardic colony in London which chiefly attracted his attention<sup>54</sup>.

In reply to Martínez Dormido's appeal, Nassi wrote from Amsterdam on 20 November 1654, explaining that he had approached Abraham Farar, one of the *parnasim* but not the one whom Martínez Dormido and Nassi had had most in mind "because Jacob del Monte is not in the country now"<sup>55</sup>. From this it is to be inferred that Del Monte was the member of the then *Mahamad* who was most involved in, and knowledgeable about, the various colonization projects then in progress<sup>56</sup>. Nassi goes on to say that Farar and the presiding *parnas*, Selomoh Salom, had "conferred" over his request and "acknowledging your great zeale, as well as your quality and worth, esteemed of it". He assured Martínez Dormido that the Amsterdam *parnasim* "exceedingly desire the common good and that they [*i.e.*, the Sephardic Jewish 'nation'] may have more enlargement, acknowledging that to plant themselves in that realme another congregacon" would greatly benefit Sephardic commerce and activity generally, estimating that trading collaboration between Sephardim in Holland and England would produce "no small profit arising to these provinces [*i.e.*, the United Provinces] and that realme". Nassi also referred to the question of Marrano emigration from the Iberian Peninsula, one of the central themes of Martínez Dormido's petition, confirming that many Sephardic Jews in Holland and elsewhere already knew of the efforts to secure admittance to England. Nassi was sure that success in England would stimulate increased emigration of the forcibly baptized of Jewish descent from "France, Spaine and Portugall". "And if they were certaine of the benevolence wherewith they shall be there admitted", he asks, "who can doubt that they will foresake regions wherein by constraint they doe reside, and seeke refuge procuring by their busines to inrich the countries where best entertainment shall be given them?"

<sup>53</sup> Emmanuel, *History of the Jews of the Netherlands Antilles*, I, pp. 43-44.

<sup>54</sup> While Nassi subsequently spent some years in Essequibo and Cayenne, he afterwards did become an English subject briefly, settling in Surinam whilst that colony was still under the English flag. In October 1669 he was one of the leaders of the Surinam Sephardic community which petitioned the Dutch West India Company for confirmation of the privileges granted originally under English rule.

<sup>55</sup> David Nassi to Manuel Martínez Dormido, Amsterdam, 20 Nov. 1654 (English translation), Public Record Office, London, S.P. 84/160, fol. 90.

<sup>56</sup> Del Monte, listed as the seventh richest Amsterdam Jew in 1674 had sizeable investments in the West India Company, though most of his own trading activity was with Spain, we can infer that he was much interested in Dutch activity in the Caribbean.

But, however eager the *parnasim* were to see the establishment of a Sephardic colony in London, it was simply not possible, Nassi explained, for them to openly associate the Dutch Sephardic community with the efforts in England. The Amsterdam *Mahamad* was not prepared to accede to Martínez Dormido's request that "they should write unto his Highnesse", in view of how much the States General and the burgomasters of Amsterdam have

"honoured and favoured them, making no difference in the estimation and privileges (which can be given) between us and the natives, and lately most graciously they have granted them to be citizens of the city<sup>57</sup> with affections and words of such good reputacon that they oblige, more than the benefit it-self, the gratitude which we profess and the loyalty of our proceedings".

All considered, the Amsterdam *parnasim* judged it a matter "of the greatest consequence" that the "nation" should put its loyalty to the Dutch state before everything else.

Six days after Nassi replied to Martínez Dormido, Jacob del Monte, who had, presumably, been in Hamburg, Antwerp, or Middelburg, was back in Amsterdam and penned his own response to the request that the Amsterdam *Mahamad* should intercede with England's Lord Protector<sup>58</sup>. "It is a thing impossible to be done", asserted Del Monte,

"and that it doth impugne our constancy, for, being subjects of the States who have allwaies protected us with the laws which you know, and (in this citty) as their citizens, how can you desire that our nation should write to cause jealousy in an other Potentate or Republic?"

He added, though, that "if it were a thing feasible and not hurtfull (because you are a subject so meritorious) they would do it". A third letter replying to Martínez Dormido was sent at about the same time jointly by Selomoh Salom, the presiding *parnas* and that year's treasurer of the Amsterdam community, Jacob Bueno de Mesquita<sup>59</sup>. Again, it was explained, it was the political "inconveniences", fear of offending the Dutch authori-

<sup>57</sup> This refers to the resolution of the Amsterdam city council of 23 October 1654, in response to a request from the Portuguese Jewish community (following interference with goods belonging to some of its merchants in Spain) to be recognized as citizens (*poorters*). The resolution was in fact considerably less generous than the English rendering of Nassi's letter suggests as it conferred only minor citizenship status, the Jews still being debarred from shop-keeping and most guilds which meant that they were rigidly excluded from most retail trade and crafts, H.I. Bloom, *The Economic Activities of the Jews of Amsterdam in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (1937, new edn Port-Washington, New York, 1969), p. 155.

<sup>58</sup> Jacob del Monte to Manuel Martínez Dormido, Amsterdam, 26 November 1654. Public Record Office, London, S.P. 84/160, fol. 90.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

ties, which prevented the community from openly associating itself with the efforts in England.

Why did Martínez Dormido have these three letters rendered into English and put before the Council of State as part of his appeal against the Council's unfavorable reaction to his first petition? The second petition which he submitted together with the English renderings of these letters, at the end of November 1654, shows us (once more) how closely akin Martínez Dormido's arguments, strategy, and political outlook were to that of his associate, Menasseh ben Israel. As does Menasseh, he lays the main emphasis on the commercial advantages that will accrue to England through allowing the Jews, by which he means the Sephardim, as (for the most part) did Menasseh, to "come and dwell with their families and estates in these countries and the Dominions thereof". Twice he asserts that the Lord Protector should do it out of "the political reason of state". The only pattern of migration among the Jews which he specifically mentions was the constant seepage of Marranos from Spain and Portugal to other European countries, pointing out that this involved a substantial transfer of wealth from the Iberian Peninsula and urging that this "most noble Commonwealth may enjoy the same and participate of the full blessings wherewith He [*i.e.*, God] doth enrich the countries wherein His Chosen People have their habitation". But Martínez Dormido is also at pains to make two other points. Firstly, he feels he needs to explain why the Dutch Sephardic leadership had not lent official backing to his approach to the English government (though he does not mention Amsterdam, the States General, or the Dutch Jewish community by name). Secondly, like Menasseh, he wants to stress, indeed exaggerates, the liberal treatment and the receptiveness the Jews had encountered in those parts where they had, of late, been permitted to settle, his aim being to secure not just Jewish readmission into England but the granting to them of privileges as generous, or more so, than those already conceded to the Jews in Holland. He assures Cromwell that these Jews

"protected in other Republics sought not to make themselves odious where they are used as their natives, enjoying equall benefits and avoiding inconvenience, without adventuring that favour and peaceable possession wherein they are keeping their estates, as the good consideration and naturall discourse of that my nation doth give to understand; I am very certaine, and yet they have assured me, if they had bin able, without giving occasion to gelousie, they had suplicated Your Highnesse (by the notice which I communicated unto them of my intents) to favor me in them"<sup>60</sup>.

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<sup>60</sup> Public Record Office, London, S.P. 84/160, fol. 92. Petition of Manuel Martínez Dormido.

The Council of State, however, remained unresponsive<sup>61</sup>. In the following year, and following Menasseh's arrival in London, Martínez Dormido nevertheless remained particularly active among the group of Dutch Jews lobbying in London. He was not shy about using his position and services in his quest for government favors for himself and his family<sup>62</sup>; but he was also singularly tenacious in his support for the efforts to establish a Sephardic colony in London and more Sephardic colonies in the English "dominions". He also maintained his link with David Nassi. Within days of Menasseh's arrival in London, Martínez Dormido received intelligence from Nassi, in Amsterdam, sent on by a correspondent at St. Malo. The information concerned the Spanish battle fleet, England now being at war with Spain, and was sent to London so that Martínez Dormido could pass it on to Cromwell. It related that the main Spanish battle fleet, twenty-eight warships under Don Paulo de Contreras, carrying 11,000 men and 1,010 guns, was now at sea off the Andalusian coast. "God grant", wrote Nassi, "that they never enjoy their expectations, those wicked papists; and that His Highnesse may remain in his arms victorious, and enjoy great success for the good of his people"<sup>63</sup>. Clearly, Martínez Dormido and Nassi wished to show, at the time of Menasseh's coming to London, that Cromwell could expect political as well as commercial advantages from the Sephardic connection.

Does the evidence of Martínez Dormido's correspondence with David Nassi and with the Amsterdam *Mahamad* strengthen our claim that there was very strong support in Holland for Menasseh's mission to London and that this mission was conceived as being part of a wider and specifically Dutch Sephardic effort to secure entry to England and the English colonies? Despite the obvious fact that members of the Amsterdam *Mahamad* objected to Menasseh's mission, or at least refused to sanction it, as they had refused to affix their seal of approval to Martínez Dormido's efforts, we are surely justified in arguing that it does. To contemporary observers, the mission to London from Amsterdam in the autumn of 1655 was not in fact Menasseh ben Israel's mission, though that is how we have come to regard it, but the work of a substantial group of Dutch Sephardic Jews, acting not in defiance of, but without the official backing of, the Amsterdam *Mahamad*. As the Tuscan ambassador to London put it, in a report to

<sup>61</sup> *Cal. State Papers. Domestic*, 1654, p. 407.

<sup>62</sup> In March 1655, he applied unsuccessfully for permission to export 1,200 silver Spanish pieces of eight to merchants whom he knew "at Goa in the East Indies, from whom I hope to receive valuable effects by English ships trading to Surat . . .", *Cal. State Papers. Domestic*, 1655, 28 March.

<sup>63</sup> *A Collection of State Papers of John Thurloe*, 7 vols. (London, 1742), III, p. 750. David Nassi to M. Martínez Dormido, Amsterdam, 10 September 1655.

Florence, “diversi ebrei venuti di Amsterdam hanno suplicato il signore Protettore di havere in Londra una loro sinagoga”<sup>64</sup>. In a letter from The Hague, written eleven days after Menasseh’s departure from Amsterdam for London, the English royalist Richard Overton wrote to Sir Marmaduke Langdale that the “information you have touching the Jewes application to England may have ground upon the going over of many of them; and among the rest Menasseh ben Israel, a learned Rabbi among them at Amsterdam is gone over, but he pretended only a short stay”<sup>65</sup>. The number of Sephardim, most of them just over from Holland, resident in London by the beginning of December 1655, was sufficiently large to encourage Manuel Martínez Dormido, who saw himself as their principal secular figure and Menasseh’s chief associate, to petition Cromwell that he be granted the “nomination and title of Consull of my nation”<sup>66</sup>.

If we now consider the text of the open letter which Menasseh signed and sent off to several “Holy Synagogues of Italy and Holstein”<sup>67</sup> on the eve of his departure for England on 2 September 1655, we find, arguably, several indications of the specific context in which Menasseh’s mission was conceived. Firstly, there is the fact that Menasseh published his letter in Portuguese and, as far as is known, circulated it only among the Sephardic communities of western Europe, the only known surviving copy of the letter having been discovered by Cecil Roth in Venice. Roth thought it “somewhat puzzling” that Menasseh should have published his open letter in Portuguese rather than in Hebrew as would befit a communication to the Jewish world generally<sup>68</sup>. But here, it seems, Roth is missing the point. Menasseh was by no means unaware of Jewish suffering in eastern Europe, or of the influx of Ashkenazic refugees to Hamburg and Amsterdam in the 1650s; but his mission to London was conceived in a specifically Dutch Sephardic milieu and was designed to alleviate the problems confronting the western Sephardim at just this time. It was, in fact, perfectly logical that Menasseh issued his call for support in Portuguese and circulated it among the western Sephardic communities. Furthermore, in the text he alludes to the evident disapproval with which his mission was regarded by some wealthy Jews “protegidos de clementissimos principes e magistrados”, by which, though he does not say so, we may infer he means principally the gentlemen of the *Mahamad* in Amsterdam<sup>69</sup>. Menasseh

<sup>64</sup> Roth, “New Light”, p. 138.

<sup>65</sup> Mordecai Wilensky, “The Royalist Position Concerning the Readmission of Jews to England”, *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, new series, XLI (1951), p. 402.

<sup>66</sup> Public Record Office, London, S.P. 84/161, fol. 48. Petition of M. Martínez Dormido to the Lord Protector, 4 December 1655.

<sup>67</sup> By which he meant Hamburg and Glückstadt.

<sup>68</sup> Roth, “New Light”, p. 116.

<sup>69</sup> For the Portuguese text of the letter, see *ibid.*, p. 136.



knew that there was no concealing from the communal leadership of the Italian and German Sephardic communities that the Amsterdam leadership was refusing to associate itself with his endeavors. But as against this, and he believed that this would carry weight with the leadership outside the Dutch Republic, he was able to assure them that his mission was being received with "aplausu comun" by the mass of the Sephardic community which, in this context, given that the mission was not yet known about in Italy, can only mean among the mass of the Sephardim in Holland. Menasseh may have believed that it was to the advantage of all Jews that they should have a haven and refuge in England; but the need he had chiefly in mind was that of the uprooted western Sephardic Jews and the new wave of Marranos leaving Spain<sup>70</sup>.

The mood of intense expectation and excitement among Dutch Sephardic Jewry aroused by the Whitehall Conference, in December 1655, rapidly ebbed thereafter. The general atmosphere in England seemed not at all receptive to the Jews. There was, remarked the Tuscan ambassador, "grande oppositione, massime di questi predicanti, mercanti, e del popolo"<sup>71</sup>. As month after month elapsed without the expected proclamation and charter being forthcoming, even the most hopeful became disillusioned. "Those few Iewes that were here", as Menasseh put it, "despairing of our expected success departed hence". Menasseh and Martínez Dormido went on trying to salvage something. On 24 March 1656 the leadership of the Sephardic group in London petitioned Cromwell for permission in writing that they could meet privately for prayers without being interfered with as they had hitherto under his protection, and for a cemetery for their dead, the signatures on this petition being headed by those of Menasseh and Martínez Dormido<sup>72</sup>. And, of course, as we know, the private practice of Judaism in England continued to be tolerated. These crucial years did indeed mark the beginnings of Anglo-Jewry. Yet in terms of what had been sought, and what Dutch Sephardic Jewry needed, Menasseh's mission was a decided failure. The significant fact, at the time, was not that a few Jews stayed but that most of those who had come over from Holland now left again. Without a formal proclamation and a charter, it seemed that there was no proper or secure basis for an immediate and sizeable influx of Sephardic refugees such as was envisaged. There

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<sup>70</sup> And, for political reasons, he had particularly to stress his concern for the latter, especially in dealing with the Dutch authorities; the Dutch ambassador in London reported to The Hague, on 31 December 1655, that Menasseh had been to see him and "did assure me that he doth not desire any thing for the Jews in Holland, but only for such as sit in the Inquisition in Spain and Portugal", Thurloe, *State Papers*, IV, p. 333.

<sup>71</sup> Roth, "New Light", p. 138.

<sup>72</sup> Roth, *A Life of Menasseh ben Israel*, pp. 258-259.

would be no public practice of Judaism and no guarantees for their trade.

Amid this disappointment, and following the death of his son, Samuel, on 10 September 1657, Menasseh determined to return to the Republic, though he chose to cross to Middelburg, not Amsterdam where, two years before, he had departed amid scenes of euphoria. Of course, there is no evidence that Menasseh's choice of Middelburg was in any way dictated by the ambitious colonizing plans then on hand there; but, at the very least, there was something deeply symbolic about the timing and circumstances of his arrival there. Middelburg at that moment was a microcosm of the mid-century crisis confronting the western Sephardic world. A large body of refugees from Brazil, uprooted, restless, and more numerous, seemingly, than could be absorbed locally, were still in the town. The month of Menasseh's arrival, October, was the very same in which Sephardic leaders, including some from Amsterdam, almost certainly with David Nassi among them, met at Middelburg with the States of Zeeland committee governing Nova Zeelandia and settled the charter of Jewish rights in the colony. Plans were afoot for recruiting Sephardic colonists not just locally but at Amsterdam and in Italy. The house being used as the synagogue in Middelburg belonged, aptly enough, to a prominent exile from Brazil, Paulo Jacomo de Pinto, a man who was at the center of the efforts to promote Jewish settlement in Nova Zeelandia<sup>73</sup>. Menasseh died on 20 November 1657, about five weeks after his arrival in Zeeland. But his last weeks were spent surrounded by activity which was to mark an important step in the progress of Jewish life in the New World. How very fitting this was.

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<sup>73</sup> Van 't Hoff, *loc. cit.*, p. 21; Isidore Harris, "A Dutch Burial-Ground and its English Connections", *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, (1911-1914), p. 117.

PETRUS SERRARIUS AND MENASSEH BEN ISRAEL:  
CHRISTIAN MILLENARIANISM AND JEWISH MESSIANISM IN  
SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY AMSTERDAM

ERNESTINE G.E. VAN DER WALL

It is a well-known fact that the famous Amsterdam Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel (1604-1657) maintained various friendly relationships with non-Jewish contemporaries. Whenever the circle of Menasseh's friends is described, one never fails to pay attention to his personal contacts with renowned Christian scholars such as Gerardus Johannes Vossius, Caspar Barlaeus, Hugo Grotius, Claudius Salmasius, and other men of the so-called "Republic of Letters", showing the great reputation the Jewish Rabbi enjoyed in the learned non-Jewish world. Furthermore, the names of various members of the international Christian millenarian circle are always present, such as those of the British theologians John Dury, Henry Jessey and Nathaniel Homes, the Silesian Boehmist Abraham von Franckenberg, the Portuguese Jesuit Antonio de Vieira, the Bohemian visionary Paul Felgenhauer, and the Amsterdam theologian Petrus Serrarius. Serrarius is one of the lesser known figures among Menasseh's friends. In Cecil Roth's biography on Menasseh his name is only mentioned in passing<sup>1</sup>. Henry Méchoulan and Gérard Nahon, in the very clear and interesting introduction to their edition of the *Miqweh Israel*, give some attention to Serrarius' place in the world around Menasseh and to his views on the dominant role of the Jews in the messianic scheme<sup>2</sup>. On the whole, however, he has remained one of the more obscure members of the circle around the Rabbi. The present paper may be considered as a further introduction of this millenarian friend of Menasseh ben Israel.

Petrus Serrarius (Serarius) was born on 11 May 1600 in London. He de-

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<sup>1</sup> Cecil Roth, *A Life of Menasseh ben Israel, Rabbi, Printer, and Diplomat* (Philadelphia, 1934), p. 154. In Lucien Wolf, *Menasseh ben Israel's Mission to Oliver Cromwell* (London, 1901), Serrarius is not mentioned. See also H.-J. Schoeps, *Philosemitismus im Barock* (Tübingen, 1952), pp. 51, 52.

<sup>2</sup> Henri Méchoulan et Gérard Nahon (Introd., trad. et notes par —), *Menasseh ben Israel. Espérance d'Israel* (Paris, 1979), pp. 55, 56, 59, 60.

scended from a well-to-do Walloon merchant family (by name of Serrurier) that had fled its country because of the persecutions under the Duke of Alva and had settled in London. The families of Menasseh ben Israel and Serrarius thus shared the same background of flight from the Inquisition, living like exiles in a foreign country, both Menasseh and Serrarius finding their second homeland in the Low Countries. Probably Serrarius spent the greater part of his youth in his native country, studying at Oxford from 1617 till 1619.

In 1620 he left England for good and went to the Dutch Republic in order to receive his theological training in Leiden. In the period that Menasseh already served the Amsterdam Spanish-Portuguese congregation as a Rabbi, Serrarius was studying theology at the Walloon College, an ecclesiastical institution founded by the Walloon Churches in 1606 to provide for a theological training of its ministers<sup>3</sup>. In 1626 he was appointed minister of the Walloon congregation at Cologne. After nearly two years however, he was deposed from the ministry, the reason being presumably his leaning towards a more mystical theology. It is unknown how he got to know mystical, and especially Boehmist, literature, but his correspondence of the time shows the deep influence of the ideas of the German mystic Jacob Boehme (1575-1624). He then went to study medicine at the University of Groningen, showing great interest in iatrochemistry. In 1630, however, without having finished his medical training, he settled at Amsterdam, the economical, cultural and religious center of the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, where he would live until his death in 1669. In this city, "that bank of conscience, where not one so strange opinion but finds credit and exchange"<sup>4</sup>, he had every chance of meeting kindred spirits, moving in the circles of the anti-confessional Collegiants, of Boehmists, mystics and millenarians. Bred in the atmosphere of orthodox Calvinism he gradually developed into a mystic spiritualist and a convinced millenarian. Instead of serving one particular church he preferred to be a "minister of the universal Church"<sup>5</sup>.

Unlike Menasseh who already at a young age started to publish learned works and quickly won great fame in Jewish and non-Jewish circles alike, Serrarius only in a later stage of his life became a well-known figure, being

<sup>3</sup> For the Walloon College and its history, see G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes, *Geschiedenis van het Waalse College te Leiden 1606-1699* (Leiden, 1975). On Serrarius, see E.G.E. van der Wall, *De mystieke chiliast Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669) en zijn wereld* (Leiden, 1987). (An English version of this study is in preparation).

<sup>4</sup> See Andrew Marvell, "The Character of Holland", lines 73-74 (quoted by David S. Katz, *Philosemitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England 1603-1655* (Oxford, 1982), note 18, p. 158).

<sup>5</sup> Thus Serrarius called himself on the title-page of his *Examen Synodorum* (Amsterdam, 1668).

a prolific author of theological and millenarian works and also translating writings of a mystical and spiritualistic nature. His first philo-Judaistic millenarian tract appeared in 1657, entitled *Assertion du Règne de Mille Ans*<sup>6</sup>. It was a refutation of an anti-chiliastic work by the well-known French theologian Moyse Amyraut. The *Assertion*, praised for its clear and systematic exposition<sup>7</sup>, contained all his fundamental ideas on the future millennium and the important role of the Jews in the millennial scheme. A few years later a conflict arose with the Groningen professor of theology Samuel Maresius, mainly about his notions on the general conversion of the Jews and their glorious restoration in the Holy Land; a *semi-Judaeus* he was called by Maresius<sup>8</sup>. Besides defending his millenarian, philo-Judaistic concepts, he took part in several controversies of his day, for example, in the so-called "Lamb's war", a dispute between the conservative and liberal Mennonites, taking the side of the latter. His mystic spiritualism also came to the fore in his refutation of Louis Meyer's controversial *Philosophia S. Scripturae Interpres*, in which he defended spiritualistic hermeneutics over against the rational cartesianism of Meyer<sup>9</sup>.

Among his intimate friends were well-known contemporaries such as John Dury – we will return to him below –, the learned theologian, millenarian, and pedagogue Jan Amos Comenius (Komensky), Bishop of the Bohemian Brethren, and the prominent German mystic spiritualists Friedrich Breckling and Christian Hoburg. Furthermore the mystic alchemist Franciscus Mercurius van Helmont, author of the *Alphabetum Naturale Hebraicum* (1667), the Christian kabbalist Christian Knorr von Rosenroth, famous for his *Kabbala Denudata*, and the Groningen professor of oriental studies Jacobus Alting were connected with the circle of Serrarius' friends. He carried on a regular correspondence with people all over Europe, and especially in his native country. During the years of the upheaval around the messianic movement of Sabbatai Ševi and the assembling of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel, he was very busy sending reports to England, where Henry Oldenburg, Nathaniel Homes, and Thomas Chappell and others

<sup>6</sup> Full title: *Assertion du Règne de Mille Ans ou de la Prosperité de l'Eglise de Christ en la Terre. Pour servir de responce au Traité de Monsieur Moyse Amyraut sur ce même sujet. Descourrant le triste Préjugé qui possède aujourd'huy la plupart des Eglises contre le règne du Seigneur de toute la Terre. "O Dieu lève toy, juge la Terre, car tu hériteras en toutes les Nations", Psal. 82. v. 8.* (Amsterdam, 1657).

<sup>7</sup> J. Wallmann, *Philipp Jakob Spener und die Anfänge des Pietismus* (Tübingen, 1970), p. 331: "Eine bessere Einführung in die chiliastische Gedankenwelt und eine bessere Zurüstung zur Widerlegung orthodoxer Einwände gibt es zu dieser Zeit wohl nirgendwo".

<sup>8</sup> The controversy with Maresius was partly about Serrarius' astrological notions, see Ernestine G.E. van der Wall, "An Awakening Warning to the Wofull World (1662). Millenarianism and Astrology in Petrus Serrarius", *Ned. Archief voor Kerkgesch.*, LXIV (1984), pp. 196-214.

<sup>9</sup> See Van der Wall, "Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669) et l'interprétation de l'Écriture", *Cahiers Spinoza* (Paris, 1984/85), pp. 186-216.

anxiously awaited the latest news. Some of his letters, containing abstracts of letters sent to the Amsterdam Jews from various places, were collected and published as pamphlets at London<sup>10</sup>. The French ex-Jesuit and Walloon minister at Middelburg (Zealand), Jean de Labadie, was also informed by him about king Sabbatai and his prophet, Nathan of Gaza. In view of these events De Labadie wrote his pro-Jewish tract *Jugement Charitable sur l'État Présent des Juifs* (1667), dedicating it to Serrarius and two of his brothers, warmly commending them upon their charitable attitude towards the Jews. On the author's request the *Jugement Charitable* was translated by Serrarius into Dutch<sup>11</sup>.

If one might speak of "Christian Sabbateans", then Serrarius may be considered as such, believing that Sabbatai Sevi was a precursor of the coming Messiah, teaching the Jews to know the true Messiah. After Sabbatai's conversion to the Islam he supported those Jews who believed that Sabbatai "was not turned Türck, but a Jew as ever in the same hope and expectation as before", being convinced that he would once return to gather the Jews to the Holy Land<sup>12</sup>.

From his life and work it is apparent that Serrarius was deeply interested in the Jews. This interest – reflected in is "Sabbateanism" – was one of the dominant facets of his millenarianism. Although his views on the Jews have to be regarded within a conversionist scope, it cannot be denied that he genuinely cared about the Jews. On the one hand his millenarian ideas were the source of his inspiration for his philo-Judaism, on the other hand this positive attitude towards the Jews may in its turn have been largely affected by his personal contacts with a number of Jews. He was a familiar figure in Amsterdam Jewish circles, mainly those of the Sephardim. By one of his contemporaries he was described as "the good Christian friend who lives here in Amsterdam in friendship with the rabbis"<sup>12a</sup>. Unfortunately most of these Jewish friends are unknown to us. Among them, however, was one of the most renowned of seventeenth-century Jews: Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel.

One reason may account for the fact that up till now few words have been devoted to Menasseh and his friendly relations with Serrarius: our infor-

<sup>10</sup> See Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi. The Mystical Messiah 1626-1676* (London, 1973), pp. 333-336.

<sup>11</sup> On De Labadie, see W. Goeters, *Die Vorbereitung des Pietismus in der Reformierten Kirche der Niederlande bis zur Labadistischen Krisis 1670* (Leipzig, 1911 [Amsterdam, 1974]), esp. pp. 47-49, 160-161. The Dutch translation is entitled *Oordeel der liefde en gerechtigheyt over de den tegenwoordigen toestand der Joden* (Amsterdam, 1667).

<sup>12</sup> On Serrarius and his involvement in the Sabbatean movement, see Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, pp. 344-346, 356-357, 375, 455, 470, 481, 521, 537, 545, 609, 753-756.

<sup>12a</sup> See Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, pp. 334, 335 note 12.

mation concerning their friendship is based on just a few lines in the well-known tract of Paul Felgenhauer, entitled *Bonum Nuncium Israeli* (1655). In his Dedication to the "Hebrew Philosopher and Theologian Menasseh ben Israel", Felgenhauer relates how, in December 1654, he met the rabbi for the first time. This meeting took place at the house of Serrarius, who, as Felgenhauer remarks, was a mutual friend of theirs<sup>13</sup>. A few days later Serrarius and Felgenhauer, in their turn, went to visit Menasseh at his house in order to continue their discussion about the coming of the Messiah, a discussion which they had started during their first meeting. The two millenarians were warmly received by the rabbi, and returned later on once more to his house. So far Felgenhauer, from whose relation it may be inferred that Menasseh and Serrarius were rather intimately befriended, visiting each other regularly.

Their discussions, held together with Felgenhauer, resulted in the latter's *Good News to Israel*, which in February 1655 came from the press. This small volume contained also a letter of Menasseh in answer to Felgenhauer's tract, and, moreover, some letters written to the rabbi by millenarian correspondents, among whom were Von Franckenberg, Homes and Jessey<sup>14</sup>. So this volume was made in close cooperation between Menasseh and the Bohemian chiliast. Two months later Menasseh published his famous messianic writing, the *Piedra gloriosa o de la estatua de Nebuchadnesar*, in which he expressed his belief in the imminence of the Fifth Monarchy, the messianic kingdom. When writing this treatise, undoubtedly the discussions with Serrarius and Felgenhauer were still vivid to his mind<sup>15</sup>.

Felgenhauer's account, then, is our only source of information about the personal contacts between Menasseh and Serrarius. It is unknown when and how they met each other. It is possible that they got acquainted through their common world of business, that of booksellers and printers.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Felgenhauer, *Bonum Nuncium Israeli quod offertur populo Israel et Iudae in hisce temporibus novissimis de Messia quod scilicet redemptio israelis, ab omnibus iniquitatibus suis, et liberatio a captivitate, et adventus messiae gloriosus jam nunc proxime insent . . . a quodam Christiano, qui adventum Messiae cum Iudaeis exspectat . . .*, 1655, in "Dedicatio ad Virum Clarissimum, Philosophum et Theologum Hebraeum Manasse ben Israel . . .": "non plures elapsi sunt dies, quando Reverentiam tuam prima facie viderim, in hospitio dilecti nostri PETRI SERARII, amici, ubi primus noster sermo erat de MESSIAH, quamquam brevissimus: Postea concluderemus, Petrus ille noster et ego Paulus, ut pro placito R.T. Te conveniremus in aedibus . . .". See also Roth, *A Life*, pp. 154-156; H.-J. Schoeps, *Philosemitismus*, pp. 18-45.

<sup>14</sup> Felgenhauer, *Bonum Nuncium*, pp. 89-103. Besides the letters of Homes and Jessey, those of the Silesian Boehmist Abraham von Franckenberg, the German Johann Möchinger and the French theologian Isaac La Peyrère are published in this section. Menasseh presented, not without some pride, copies of this volume to visitors, such as the Swiss Johann Zollikoffer, a friend of Johan Buxtorf the younger, see Roth, *A Life*, pp. 156, 165.

<sup>15</sup> The *Piedra gloriosa* is famous for its four engravings by Rembrandt.

As we know, besides being a rabbi of the Spanish-Portuguese congregation, Menasseh was also a printer and a bookseller. Among his business associates were Christian printers and booksellers such as Henricus Laurentius and Johannes Janssonius<sup>16</sup>. In 1636 it was the latter who published an edition of Menasseh's *De Creatione Problemata XXX*, a tract that gave rise to a fiery dispute because of the song of praise by Caspar Barlaeus that preceded the work<sup>17</sup>. It may have been Serrarius who read the proofs of this edition: since the beginning of the 1630s he worked as a proof reader at an Amsterdam publishing house, which to all probability was that of Janssonius. So Serrarius may have met the rabbi here for the first time.

It is, however, also likely that they were introduced to each other by one of their mutual friends. Serrarius and Menasseh had several friends in common, both Jews and non-Jews. As regards the latter, some of them belonged, like Serrarius himself, to the small circle of philo-Judaists that came into existence around the middle of the seventeenth century. It was their desire to help to bring about the general conversion of the Jews by showing them love and charity, hoping that in this way the Jews would eventually be led to the fountain of all love, Christ.

Some of those millenarian philo-Judaists were not only in personal contact with Menasseh, but they were also befriended by Serrarius. First of all John Dury should be mentioned. Since the 1640s he was acquainted with the Amsterdam rabbi and corresponded with him about the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel, thus initiating the active political campaign for the readmission of the Jews to England<sup>18</sup>. Dury was an intimate friend of Serrarius. In the early 1620s both studied theology at the Walloon College in Leiden. Throughout their lives they kept close contact with each other, carrying on a regular correspondence in which their common interest, the conversion of the Jews, was a recurrent theme. During his many travels throughout Europe, negotiating for the union of the Protestant churches, Dury often enjoyed Serrarius' hospitality when staying in Amsterdam. Presumably they sometimes went to visit Menasseh together.

The names of the prominent philo-Judaists Henry Jessey and Nathaniel Homes have already been mentioned: Menasseh proudly published their letters in the *Bonum Nuncium Israeli* as proof of the fact that the kingdom of

<sup>16</sup> See, *inter alia*, L. and R. Fuks, "Hebreeuwse boekdrukkunst in Nederland", *Studia Rosenthaliana*, XIV (1980), pp. 191-204, esp. p. 195.

<sup>17</sup> See F.F. Blok, "Caspar Barlaeus en de Joden. De geschiedenis van een epigram", *Ned. Archief voor Kerkgesch.*, LVII (1977), pp. 179-210.

<sup>18</sup> For Dury (1596-1680) and his relations with Menasseh, see Roth, *A Life*, pp. 181-184; S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England 1603-1655* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 87, 144, 156, 160, 216-219; Van der Wall, "Three Letters by Menasseh ben Israel to John Durie. English Philo-Judaism and the 'Spes Israelis'", *Ned. Archief voor Kerkgesch.*, LXV (1985), pp. 46-63.



Israel was beginning to be preached throughout the whole world; this was considered by both Felgenhauer and Menasseh to be a sign of the Messiah's advent. Homes and Jessey also corresponded with Serrarius<sup>19</sup>. The London Baptist minister and Saturday-Sabbatarian Henry Jessey, who signed his letters as "one that longs to see Jerusalem made a praise in the Earth", became known for his activities in the readmission campaign for the Jews to England. He was the man behind the scenes of the Whitehall Conference, held on this issue in December 1655<sup>20</sup>. Together with Dury, he was involved in the collection for the poor Jews in Palestine, that was organized by Serrarius in the 1650s<sup>21</sup>.

Besides their close cooperation for the benefit of the Jews, Serrarius also translated some of Jessey's works into Dutch. Thus, in 1653, he published a Dutch translation of Jessey's philo-Judaistic millenarian treatise *The Glory of Jehudah and Israel* (1650). This translation, entitled *De Heerlickheydt en Heyl van Jehuda en Israel*, soon became known in Jewish and non-Jewish circles alike. Menasseh read it, mentioning this writing both in his answer to Felgenhauer and in his *Humble Addresses*. Pointing out to Cromwell the nobility of the Jews – as one of the reasons why they should be admitted to settle in England –, he referred to the book of "that worthy Christian Minister Mr. *Henry Jessey*, (1653 in Dutch)", in which this point "hath been most worthily and excellently shewed and described"<sup>22</sup>.

Maybe he was also somewhat flattered by the preface to this tract: Jessey, dedicating his work to the distressed Jews in general and to the Spanish-Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam in particular, related that he was a great admirer of Rabbi Menasseh's learned works. Upon hearing that this famous author was still alive, living in Amsterdam, he had started to correspond with him. This correspondence had occasioned the publication of this treatise: he had written it in consolation for the distressed Jews, showing them that once they would be restored to a glorious state, while expressing his hope that the time would be near when ten men out of all nations would take hold of the skirt of a Jew, saying: "We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you" (Zechariah 8:23). One may

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<sup>19</sup> See, *inter alia*, Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, pp. 33, 99, 104, 105, 107. For the relations of Serrarius with Jessey and Homes, see Van der Wall, "The Amsterdam Millenarian Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669) and the Anglo-Dutch Circle of Philo-Judaists", in J. van den Berg and E.G.E. van der Wall (eds.), *Jewish-Christian Relations in the Seventeenth Century. Studies and Documents* (Dordrecht, 1988), pp. 73-94.

<sup>20</sup> See Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, pp. 103, 104.

<sup>21</sup> See Richard H. Popkin, "Rabbi Nathan Shapira's visit to Amsterdam in 1657", in J. Michman and T. Levie (eds.), *Dutch Jewish History*, Jerusalem 1984, pp. 185-205. See also Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, p. 214.

<sup>22</sup> See Wolf, *Menasseh ben Israel's Mission*, p. 103. The Dutch translation is entitled *De Heerlickheydt en Heyl van Jehuda en Israel*.

safely assume that Menasseh not only knew the Dutch translation but the Dutch translator as well.

Like Jessey the learned theologian and millenarian Nathaniel Homes ("Chiliastorum Achilles") was deeply interested in Jewish matters. He corresponded with Menasseh to know the rabbi's opinion on various subjects. Homes published several influential millenarian works, most of which were present in Serrarius' library. In the 1660s, when rumors out of the Near East concerning the appearance of a "king of the Jews" and his "prophet" reached Europe, he eagerly awaited Serrarius' letters on this subject.

So Dury, Jessey and Homes were all in personal contact with both Menasseh and Serrarius. Besides these philo-Judaists – to which Felgenhauer also has to be reckoned – there were more men belonging to the circle of their mutual friends, such as the learned Hebraist Adam Boreel and the German theologian and alchemist Johannes Moriaen. In December 1645 Boreel, a good friend of both Serrarius and Dury, settled in Amsterdam in order to devote his time to Hebrew studies. The following year he published a Hebrew edition of the Mishna, that was printed by Menasseh who also wrote a preface to it<sup>23</sup>. Another Jew was also involved in this edition: Rabbi Jacob Judah Leon (Templo), who provided the vowel points and a preface of his own. It is highly likely that through Boreel Serrarius got acquainted with this rabbi, who became renowned for his models of Solomon's temple, writing a successful tract on this subject, a Hebrew version of which was present in Serrarius' library<sup>24</sup>. In the 1650s Boreel stayed in England for some time and was involved there in Menasseh's negotiations about the resettlement of the Jews.

Furthermore the unfamiliar but interesting figure of the German Johannes Moriaen should be mentioned here<sup>25</sup>. Moriaen had been a Lutheran minister before settling in Amsterdam where he devoted his time, among other things, to alchemical experiments. He was intimately befriended by Serrarius, Dury, Boreel, and Menasseh. From his extensive correspondence with Samuel Hartlib, the "Great Intelligencer" and the stimulating figure of the so-called Hartlib circle, as well as from Me-

<sup>23</sup> See Roth, *A Life*, pp. 81, 82; Richard H. Popkin, "Some Aspects of Jewish-Christian Interchanges in Holland and England", in Van den Berg and Van der Wall (eds.), *Jewish-Christian Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, pp. 3-32.

<sup>24</sup> On Rabbi Jacob Judah Leon (1603-1675), see *Enc. Jud.* 15, pp. 998, 999; G.H. Turnbull, *Hartlib, Dury and Comenius. Gleanings from Hartlib's Papers (HDC)* (London, 1947), pp. 258, 262; Méchoulán et Nahon, *Espérance d'Israel*, pp. 87, 88. A Latin version of Judah Leon's tract was owned by Spinoza.

<sup>25</sup> On Johannes Moriaen, see M. Blekastad (Hrsg.), *Unbekannte Briefe des Comenius und seiner Freunde 1641-1661* (Kastellaun, 1976), pp. 9, 10, 125-150 (publication of nine letters by Moriaen).

nasseh's own letters it is apparent that he was a good friend of the rabbi. It was Moriaen who cared for the transmission of Menasseh's *Miqweh Israel* to England, an affair which at first was not altogether successful<sup>26</sup>. He served as an intermediary between Menasseh and Hartlib, once replying to his English friend that Menasseh could not answer Hartlib's letter himself because the rabbi was too busy preparing his sermon for the next day.

There is a possibility that Serrarius met the French theologian and millenarian Isaac La Peyrère while the latter visited Amsterdam in 1655. Felgenhauer might have introduced him to La Peyrère, whose *Du Rappel des Juifs*, anonymously published in 1643, was present in Serrarius' library. Menasseh, who also may have got acquainted with him during this Amsterdam stay, was greatly inspired by his work and he praised the author highly in his own writings. However, La Peyrère's very controversial *Prae-Adamitae* (printed in Amsterdam in 1655 and also owned by Serrarius) was refuted by Menasseh as well as Felgenhauer<sup>27</sup>.

Their common circle of friends did also include a number of Jews, such as the Portuguese physician Isaac de Rocamora. To all probability Serrarius got acquainted with Rocamora – a former Dominican priest and as such confessor to Infanta Maria, afterwards Empress of Austria – through the medium of Menasseh, who was intimately befriended by this physician and introduced him with some pride to his non-Jewish acquaintances<sup>28</sup>. After Menasseh's death, especially during the years of the Sabbatean movement, Serrarius and Rocamora kept in regular contact<sup>29</sup>.

Furthermore, one of Menasseh's pupils, the young philosopher and lens grinder Baruch de Spinoza should be mentioned. After his separation from the Jewish community in July 1656, Spinoza moved for some time in the circle of the anti-confessional Collegiants, to which – as we have seen – Serrarius also belonged, so they probably met there for the first time. It may very well have been Serrarius who, in 1657, introduced him to the Quakers, and, in particular, to their leader William Ames, by whom Serrarius was befriended at the time. Spinoza translated some conversionist Quaker pamphlets into Hebrew, among which Margaret Fell's letter to Menasseh ben Israel. In later years Serrarius cared for the transmission of Spinoza's manuscripts and letters to their common friend Henry Ol-

<sup>26</sup> See his letter to Hartlib, dated 7 October 1650, in Blekastad, *Unbekannte Briefe*, p. 148.

<sup>27</sup> On Isaac La Peyrère (1596-1676) and Menasseh, see R.H. Popkin, "Menasseh ben Israel and Isaac de la Peyrère" (Part I), *Studia Rosenthaliana*, VIII (1974), pp. 59-63; (Part II), *Studia Rosenthaliana*, XVIII (1984), pp. 12-20, 27. See also Popkin, "The Marrano Theology of Isaac de la Peyrère", *Studi Internazionali di Filosofia*, V (1973), pp. 97-126.

<sup>28</sup> On Isaac de Rocamora (±1600-1684), see Roth, *A Life*, pp. 120-122, who calls him "the most extraordinary, if not the most profound of Menasseh's physician friends".

<sup>29</sup> On the contacts between Rocamora and Serrarius in the 1660s, see Scholem, *Sabbatai Ševi*, p. 345.

denburg, secretary to the Royal Society. From the Oldenburg correspondence it is apparent that the millenarian and the philosopher saw each other regularly during those years. Oldenburg also knew Menasseh whom he had met during the latter's stay in London at Boreel's lodgings<sup>30</sup>.

Finally, the name of the rich Jewish merchant Abraham Pereyra should be mentioned here. He was one of the founders of the *yesibah* at Amsterdam, of which Menasseh was the principal. Pereyra, a devout man and author of edifying literature, was an enthusiastic adherent of Sabbatai Şevi: in March 1666 he left Amsterdam for the Holy Land to attend the establishment of the messianic kingdom by this "King of the Jews". Undoubtedly Serrarius knew this follower of Sabbatai, who occupied the leading place among the small group of Amsterdam Sabbateans that clinged to its belief in the "King of Israel"<sup>31</sup>.

Dury, Homes, Jessey, Felgenhauer, Boreel, Moriaen, Hartlib, Oldenburg, Rocamora, Spinoza, Pereyra: these names show that Menasseh and Serrarius moved – largely – in the same circle of friends. But there was more that created a common bond: both of them lived in great eschatological expectation, awaiting the Fifth Monarchy, the glorious restoration of the entire Jewish nation, in the near future. We know that Menasseh was deeply interested in the ideas of such millenarians as La Peyrère, Johann Möchinger, and Antonio de Vieira, and so he will also have listened attentively to Serrarius whose ideas concerning Christ's intermediate advent, the restoration of the kingdom in Israel and the Christian attitude towards the Jews were of a similar kind<sup>32</sup>.

Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel and the millenarian Petrus Serrarius may be regarded as exponents of the climate of eschatological expectation that made itself felt among Jews and Christians during the middle decades of the seventeenth century. Since the 1640s in various Jewish and Christian circles a deep hope had sprung up that great events would occur in the near future. Lurianic kabbalah, which became a dominant factor in Jewish life about 1630-1640, created a fertile soil for messianic expectations. It was believed that the final redemption was at hand. The hope for *tikkun*, restoration, was widespread. Similarly, Christian millenarianism flourished

<sup>30</sup> See Popkin, "Spinoza and the Conversion of the Jews", in C. de Deugd (ed.), *Spinoza's Political and Theological Thought* (Amsterdam, 1984), pp. 171-183; *idem*, "Spinoza, the Quakers and the Millenarians, 1656-1658", *Manuscrito*, VI (1984), pp. 113-133; Van der Wall, "Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669) et l'interprétation de l'Écriture".

<sup>31</sup> See Méchoulán et Nahon, *Espérance d'Israel*, p. 51; Scholem, *Sabbatai Şevi*, pp. 358, 529-530.

<sup>32</sup> On Antonio de Vieira (1608-1680), see A.J. Saraiva, "Antonio Vieira, Menasseh ben Israel et le Cinquième Empire", *Studia Rosenthaliana*, VI (1972), pp. 25-57. On Johann Möchinger (1603-1652), see Roth, *A Life*, pp. 159-160.

around the middle of the seventeenth century, also expecting the messianic age to be imminent. Christ's second coming was at hand, the Jews would be converted to Christianity, and Babylon would receive its judgement.

This atmosphere of expectation was clearly reflected in the debate about the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel that came to life again during this period among both Jews and non-Jews<sup>33</sup>. The legendary issue of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel – which (in 722 B.C.) had been carried away by King Salmanser and had never returned, believed to be staying in some secret places in the world – received renewed interest by the well-known story of Antonio de Montezinos. In 1644 Montezinos came to Amsterdam to inform the Jews, testifying under oath before Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel “and divers other chiefe men of the Portugall Nation”, of his discovery of a remnant of the Lost Ten Tribes in South America. Simultaneously other reports about the appearance of the Ten Tribes reached Jews and Christians, all this creating an atmosphere of excitement.

Menasseh did not immediately express his opinion about Montezinos' story. A few years later, however, in 1649, Dury's query about this story gave occasion to the publication of his *Miqweh Israel*. In this tract the rabbi proved at large, according to his own words, “that the day of the promised Messiah unto us doth draw near”<sup>34</sup>, interpreting Montezinos' narrative as an important sign of the coming changes. The discovery of Israelites in South America was proof of the increasing dispersion of Israel, and, as Menasseh pointed out, according to Daniel 12:7 (“And when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished”), this general dispersion was a necessary precondition for the final deliverance of the Jews. His tract was immediately successful, being very influential not only during the readmission campaign for the Jews to England, but also a decade later when rumors circulated about the return of the Ten Tribes.

Though the *Miqweh Israel* is not listed in the catalogue of his library, Serrarius undoubtedly knew this work: the issue of the Ten Tribes was of great interest to him, especially during the years 1665 and 1666, as we shall see below. The news about the Ten Tribes was interpreted by him, as by Menasseh, as a sign of the coming messianic kingdom.

It is highly likely that the discussions of Serrarius with Menasseh were

<sup>33</sup> For a clear survey of the interest in this issue, see Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, ch. 4, pp. 127-158.

<sup>34</sup> See Menasseh to Dury, 23 December 1649, in Wolf, *Menasseh ben Israel's Mission*, p. lxxviii. Copies of the three letters by Menasseh to Dury, written in 1649 and 1650, of which abstracts have been published in Thomas Thorowgood, *Jews in America*, 1650, have been preserved among the Hartlib Papers (Sheffield), see also Van der Wall, “Three Letters by Menasseh ben Israel”.

not only reflected in the former's notions about this specific issue of the Ten Tribes but also in his general concepts regarding the future messianic kingdom and the role of the Jews in the millennial drama. On several points there was a close affinity between them. Both of them were convinced that the redemption of the Jews was imminent. Both believed that the entire Jewish nation would be gathered from all ends of the world to return to its ancient homeland. It was their common conviction that the coming of the Messiah was at hand, at which the existing monarchies would be overthrown and the Fifth Monarchy would be established "under the heavens" (Daniel 7:27). It should be remembered that Menasseh published his *Piedra gloriosa* at the time when Serrarius was writing, or just started writing, his *Assertion du Règne de Mille Ans*, in which he also dealt with the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, giving an exposition of the theory of the Four Monarchies and concluding that the Fifth Monarchy was at hand. "The stone cut out of the mountain without hands" growing into "a great mountain" (Daniel 2:34, 35) was interpreted by both as the Messiah – or, according to Serrarius, Christ. They also were of one mind that this messianic kingdom would be inhabited by all pious and just, to whatever religion they belonged. These universalist notions of Menasseh, as well as his ideas on the future messianic state, were known to Serrarius not only from their discussions, but also from the two works by Menasseh that he had in his possession: the *De Resurrectione Mortuorum*, on the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the dead, recommended by Serrarius in one of his own writings; and the *De Fragilitate Humana*, a refutation of the doctrine of predestination.

As to the political elaboration of messianic ideas, Serrarius was hardly interested in assigning important roles to kings, political leaders or entire nations in the messianic drama, like La Peyrère, Vieira, and also Menasseh did. Only once, in 1660, Serrarius showed to give credence to a prophecy concerning the role of King Charles II in furthering the conversion of the Jews. Confessing that in previous years he had only paid a passing heed to this prophecy, however seeing that the prophecy partly came to be fulfilled, namely that Charles II was restored to the throne, he thought it likely that the other part of it, concerning the King and his family being instrumental in the conversion of the Jews, might be fulfilled too. He even went so far as to say that the English Restoration bore "some Shadow and Type of that Great Restitution of the Kingdom in *Israel*"<sup>35</sup>. Serrarius, then, thought along the same lines as Arise Evans, the Royalist millenarian who had several discussions with Menasseh during the latter's

<sup>35</sup> Serrarius to Dury, May 1660, portion of a letter published in an enlarged edition of Thomas Thorowgood, *Jews in America* (London, 1660).

stay in London, trying to persuade the rabbi of his Royalist views. But as Menasseh had fixed his hopes on Cromwell rather than on Charles II, he disagreed with Evans, just as he probably would have done with Serrarius<sup>36</sup>. However, had Menasseh still been alive in 1660, then maybe he would have changed his mind.

There were, of course, more differences of opinion between the Jewish rabbi and the Christian millenarian which were of greater consequence – and of an irreconcilable nature. There was the inevitable question concerning the advent of the Messiah, whether it was His first coming upon earth or His second one. Furthermore, Menasseh would nor could agree with the notion of the general conversion of the Jews.

In the following I will confine myself to dealing with some of Serrarius' views on the Jews in order to show the main facets of his philo-Judaism.

Serrarius' millenarianism was closely connected with his ideas on the restoration of the Jewish people: in the millennial reign the kingdom of Israel would be restored. The second coming of Christ was considered to be of great importance to the restoration of the Jews. In his defense of chiliasm over against orthodox fellow-Christians such as Samuel Maresius, Serrarius maintained that there was an "intermediate" advent of Christ, that is, an advent between His incarnation and His final advent in judgement at the end of days. The concept of an *intermedius adventus* or middle advent, that stemmed from the Joachimist tradition, was used by him within a conversionist scope: Christ's middle advent had to take place in order to save all Israel and to turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Romans 11:26)<sup>37</sup>. If the entire Hebrew nation would be saved, then Christ had to appear before the Last Judgement, because at this Judgement no sinners would be saved, but all would be judged according to their works. Christ's second coming, then, was regarded to be closely connected with the conversion of Israel: without this coming there would be no *restitutio Populi Israelitici*<sup>38</sup>.

In addition to various scriptural passages, Serrarius referred to rabbinical literature in which also was spoken of a particular advent of the Messiah that was to be distinguished from His coming after the resurrection of all flesh. It was in this connection that he recommended one of

<sup>36</sup> On Arise Evans, see Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, pp. 121-124, and Popkin, "Menasseh ben Israel and Isaac la Peyrère" (Part II).

<sup>37</sup> On the Joachimist concept of the intermediate advent, see Marjorie Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future* (London, 1976), *passim*. Serrarius owned works by the sixteenth-century humanists Coelius Secundus Curio and Giacopo Brocardo and may have drawn this concept from their writings.

<sup>38</sup> *Apologetica Responsio ad Samuelem Maresium* (Amsterdam, 1663), pp. 20, 21; *De Judaeorum Universali Conversione . . .* (Amsterdam, 1665), pp. 130-137.

Menasseh ben Israel's writings, the *De Resurrectione Mortuorum*, a work that was popular among Christian millenarians of the time<sup>39</sup>. In this work the rabbi maintained that there was a particular resurrection of the just only at the advent of the Messiah, that was to be distinguished from the last and general resurrection. Thus, on this point Menasseh and Serrarius were in perfect agreement, both of them believing in a resurrection of the just at the coming of the Messiah.

As to the question whether the advent of the Messiah they both expected was His first or second coming, the rabbi was, according to Serrarius, struck by blindness, being unaware of the fact that the resurrection of the just had already begun in Christ. Orthodox Christians, however, such as Maresius, might be accused of blindness, too: though acknowledging Christ's first coming, they denied that there would be a resurrection of the just at Christ's second coming. This partial blindness on both Jewish and Christian sides drew from Serrarius the exclamation:

"O admirandam utrinque Caecitatem, tam inter Christianos, quam Judaeos! *Rabbi Menasse*, inter Judaeos primarius, qui contemporaneam cum adventu Messiae Mortuorum Resurrectionem vere statuit, non videt, in Christo inceptam jam esse Mortuorum Resurrectionem, adeoque venisse Messiam, cujus tam illustria et luculenta sunt indicia. Et D. *Maresius*, inter Christiani nominis Doctores primarius, qui Christum, tanquam primogenitum ex Mortuis, et primitias resurrectionis, jam diu resurrexisse profitetur; non videt tamen, inceptam jam esse peculiarem Justorum Resurrectionem, adeoque secuturam quoque totius Massae Justorum similem suo tempore Resurrectionem; sed illam promiscue cum universae Carnis Resurrectione misere confundit . . .'"<sup>40</sup>.

Thus on the one hand Menasseh served to illustrate the blindness on the part of the Jews regarding Christ and His first coming upon earth, while, on the other hand, Maresius was brought forward as a representative of orthodox Christendom that was prejudiced against Christ's second or middle advent.

The theme of partial blindness on the side of both Jews and Christians played an important role in Serrarius' defense of millenarianism. He saw a kind of analogy between the rejection by the Jews of Christ's first advent and the refusal of the Christians to acknowledge His second coming upon earth. Although the Jews had grossly sinned by rejecting Christ, they were

<sup>39</sup> *Apol. Resp.*, p. 21, referring to *De Resurrectione Mortuorum* Book III, ch. 2-4. Other millenarians, for example, Nathaniel Homes and the German minister G.L. Seidenbecher, a good friend of Serrarius, also recommended this work by Menasseh on the same grounds, see Van der Wall, "Chiliasmus Sanctus. De toekomstverwachting van Georg Lorenz Seidenbecher (1623-1663)", *Ned. Archief voor Kerkgesch.*, LXIII (1983), pp. 69-88 (esp. p. 80).

<sup>40</sup> *Apol. Resp.*, p. 21. Maresius was not pleased by this comparison: "Transeat odiosa haec comparatio cum caeteris erroribus D. *Serarii* . . .".



right in expecting that He would once govern the world. The Christians, though accepting Christ as the promised Messiah, were in error maintaining that Christ's kingdom would never be established upon earth. To some extent the Jews might even be excused for their blindness: it was rather difficult to know the mystery of the advent of the Messiah as a suffering servant, because the Prophets only spoke of it in rather veiled terms. However, the Christians should know better regarding His coming as a king: the Old and New Testament were full of prophecies concerning this glorious advent<sup>41</sup>.

This Jewish and Christian blindness had deep roots: from one's youth upwards one grew up with certain notions to which one held fast, instead of learning the simple truth by the Spirit of the Lord:

‘‘je dis, que nous tous, tant Chrétiens que Juifs, sommes de nature enclins a nous laisser posséder par les Maximes et Principes que nous avons succé avec le lait de nostre Mère, et desquels nous avons esté imbus et informés des nostre jeunesse; avant que par l'Esprit de Dieu nous en ayons appris la vraye et naïve vérité’’<sup>42</sup>

Because of their prejudices the Christians could not admit that the Jews might know a truth that was hidden to themselves. Here Serrarius turned against the traditional anti-millenarian argument according to which millenarianism was disposed of as ‘‘Jewish fables’’ or ‘‘Jewish dreams’’. The fact, however, that the Jews did not yet believe with the Christians in Christ, need not hinder the Christians from believing with the Jews in His future kingdom upon earth: ‘‘. . . comme si ce nous seroit une disreputation de croire avec eux l'exaltation du *Règne du Messie* en la terre, pource qu'eux ne veulent ou ne peuvent encore croire avec nous son abaissement et ses souffrances en mesme lieu . . .’’<sup>43</sup>.

As he tried to convert Jews to Christianity, so, in a sense, he sought to ‘‘convert’’ anti- or non-millenarian Christians to millenarianism. From his argument about the partial blindness of both Jews and Christians, or, positively, about Jews and Christians each owning part of the truth, it may be inferred that only millenarians like Serrarius owned the whole truth, acknowledging with the Christians Christ's coming upon earth in humility, and with the Jews the Messiah's advent in glory.

Millenarianism, then, offered the solution to both Jewish and Christian blindness and paved the way to a reconciliation of Jews and Christians. In view of this it is not surprising that Serrarius stressed the fact that both Jews and Christians were now living in the same hope and expectation,

<sup>41</sup> *Assertion*, p. 130, 133.

<sup>42</sup> *Assertion*, p. 9.

<sup>43</sup> *Assertion*, p. 11.

awaiting the same event: the glorious appearance of the Messiah. There was only one difference (“Il y a seulement cette différence . . .”) concerning the question whether Christ was the promised Messiah. So seemingly the ignorance of the Jews regarding Christ was minimized. However, no opportunity was lost by Serrarius to point out to the Jews that it was this ignorance that had been the cause of their dispersion and of all the tribulations they had had to endure throughout the ages. Moreover, their aversion of Christ was regarded as the one and only barrier to their restoration, thus proving the need of their conversion to Christ.

Besides the notion of partial blindness, Serrarius also employed the concept of a brotherhood between Jews and Christians. In this his mystic spiritualism played an important part. He was an adherent of the mystic spiritualistic view of history according to which the pure Apostolical Church had fallen into deep decay since the fourth century. Throughout the ages a handful of “true” Christians remained, the main part of them however being “false” or pseudo-Christians. Against this background one has to place Serrarius’ observation that there was a kind of brotherhood between Jews and Christians.

In a dialogue between a “mourning” Jew and an “enlightened” Christian, published by Serrarius in 1665, this notion of a Jewish-Christian brotherhood was expounded<sup>44</sup>. On calling the Jew his brother, the Jew asked the Christian why he did so. The Christian replied that both Jews and Christians had sinned and that therefore they might be considered as “brothers in misery”: both of them were in a miserable condition. The Jew however could not understand this argument: were it not the Christians, together with the Turck, who possessed the whole world? was not that bestial Fourth Monarchy entirely theirs? The Jews, however, to whom the whole world had been promised, did not even have a country of their own, let alone a small piece of land: they had to live in various countries like foreigners and criminals. In short, the Jews were the most miserable people upon earth and so it was inappropriate to compare the misery of the Christians with that of the Jews<sup>45</sup>.

“Dear Jew”, Serrarius answered, “of course your misery is very great when compared with what your people owned in former times. But if you would realize what we Christians possessed formerly, then it would soon become apparent that our misery is far greater than yours”. In this connection he dilated on the apostasy of the Christian Church and, stating the

<sup>44</sup> *Een Bleyde Boodschap aan Jerusalem* (“A Happy Message to Jerusalem”) (Amsterdam, 1665).

<sup>45</sup> *Een Bleyde Boodschap*, pp. 9-12.

difference between the Jewish and Christian misery, remarked that the Jews only lost a temporary and external matter, while the Christians lost the internal good itself. The Jews might be mourning over the loss of Jerusalem, the external Temple and their ceremonial religion – these however had to perish some time. But the Christians were mourning over the loss of a spiritual town, an internal temple and an “essential and rational” religion. You lost the shadows of those divine matters, Serrarius said, we lost the essence and truth of it, and so our misery is far greater than yours<sup>46</sup>.

His appreciation of the Jewish and Christian religion was defined in terms of mystic spiritualism. In the notions about the external *versus* the internal religion – the first being only of a temporary kind, the shadow of the latter that was eternal and essential – his view on the Jewish religion as such was clearly implied. His criticism, however, was directed to both Jews and Christians: the first had only given attention to outward things, neglecting the inward, the latter had laid all emphasis on inward matters, neglecting the outward posture without which the inward religion would bear no fruit. Thus the Jewish and the Christian religion were regarded as in a sense complementary to each other. It is characteristic of Serrarius’ millenarianism that he envisages a universal religion in the millennial reign wherein these two, the external and internal worship, are harmoniously. So in the future millennium one would practice a Judaeo-Christian religion.

In this connection it should be pointed out that his notion of “the hope of Israel” is also determined by his mystic spiritualism. The hope of Israel has two facets: on the one hand it has to be interpreted in an individual sense as the hope of man for his internal and external sanctification, while on the other hand it may be considered as the hope of mankind in general, implying that first there has to be internal sanctity in Israel and that next the whole body of Israel should be externally sanctified, so that their kingdom may become a kingdom of God and their city a city of God in which He truly lives. And, though visible on earth, this will be no earthly kingdom nor an earthly city, but a manifestation of God’s heavenly reign upon earth. Now this hope of Israel concerning mankind in general will only be fulfilled when the Jews will have accepted Christ.

It has already been mentioned that the conversion of the Jews was regarded as a necessary precondition for their glorious restoration. It is no surprise then that Serrarius wanted to be instrumental in furthering the conversion of the Jews. The best way to accomplish this was “to gain them

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<sup>46</sup> *Een Bleyde Boodschap*, pp. 13-16.

through kindness’’: by exercising *practica charitas* he hoped that the Jewish hearts would melt and that they would begin to accept Christ as the true Messiah:

“For shall once their Hearts be so convinced, as to say *Hosanna*, blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord (Matthew 23:37). Then indeed they must first have had some lively and most sensible Experience of some Soul-quicking Excellency in those, that came from the Lord; which make them long for any that came in his Name . . .”<sup>47</sup>

Although the Jews would only be converted by the revelation of the true Joseph, Jesus Christ, among them, Serrarius believed that the way to this conversion could be paved by Christian acts of love and charity, as likewise their conversion could be hindered by Christian ill-treatment of the Jews. His conviction that the Jews would be more willing to accept Christ as the true Messiah if His followers would act mercifully towards them inspired him to be an active philo-Judaist, the more so since he did not doubt that the conversion of the Jews was at hand. The signs of the times all pointed to one conclusion: the redemption of the Jews was imminent. The figtree had begun to put forth her leaves, her branch to wax tender. “Yea truly those natural Branches of that same *Noble Olive tree* (of which *Paul* speakes, *Rom.* 11.) begin to tender, (. . . I speak not of a thing unexperienced) acknowledging themselves to be great sinners, giving glory to God, and justifying him in all his Judgments exercised upon them”<sup>48</sup>. From their penitent attitude one could not but infer that they were preparing themselves to accept the true Messiah.

At what time was it most likely that the conversion of the Jews would happen, Serrarius asked. Would it not be

“when they shall least dare promise that thing to themselves? Will they especially then expect it, when they are broken with the sense of their unworthiness, whether haply the Lord, the God of their Fathers will vouchsafe of his meer Grace and Mercy, to remember them? Let whoso will war against them, they will take no Arms against no man. If any man smite them, they bear it. If any drive them from place to place, they give place, and fly away, as the chased Fawns of the Hind upon the mountains. (. . .) If any will kill them with the sword, or burn them in the fire (as in *Lusitania* is often done) or attempt to bury them alive in pits (as not many years since was done in *Polonia*) they have nothing wherewith they oppose, or defend themselves, but Prayers to God . . . pleasing themselves after a sort, in the punishment of their sins; hoping in this, that the measure their punishments, and chastisements will at length be fulfilled, that God may again have mercy upon them”<sup>49</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> Serrarius to Dury, 20 May 1660, in Kennett, *A Register*, p. 138.

<sup>48</sup> *An Awakening Warning to the Wofull World* (Amsterdam, 1662), p. 41.

<sup>49</sup> *An Awakening Warning*, p. 25.

Considering repentance as a manifest sign of their imminent conversion, Serrarius rejoiced when hearing about fasting, praying and mourning among the Jews<sup>50</sup>. The great penitential revival caused by the appearance of the "Prophet" and the "Anointed King" was to him maybe the most important facet of the Sabbatean movement. This awakening, warmly applauded by him, served as an example to his impious fellow Christians.

As soon as the Jews would repent their rejection of Christ, God would bestow His mercy on them again. Their conversion to Christ would mean the end of their dispersion and their return to their ancient homeland: just as their disobedience had caused their dispersion, so their obedience would cause their gathering.

To his mind the calling of the Jews was closely linked with the fall of Babylon. It was one of Serrarius' main theses that immediately after the conversion of the Jews the divine judgement of their oppressors would take place. As soon as God would have bestowed mercy on His people, He would gird Himself to render vengeance on Babylon for her "Injustice, Pride, and all Oppression towards the miserable dispersed sheep of *Israel*"<sup>51</sup>. One is reminded of Menasseh's words that God would revenge the blood of Israel, that those who had wished the Jews evil would be punished by the just judgement of God<sup>52</sup>. Quoting various scriptural texts (Jer. 50:6, 7; Jer. 51:5; Joel 3:1-3; Lam. 4:22) Serrarius tried to prove that these two events, the conversion of the Jews and the "subversion" of Babylon, were closely joined together, the one following immediately after the other.

What was meant by "Babylon"? First and foremost those Christians who had oppressed and persecuted the Jews, imagining they acted rightly in revenging the sin that the Jews had committed against Christ. In passages reminding of La Peyrère, Robert Maton and Roger Williams, Serrarius levelled harsh criticism against his fellow Christians for their cruel treatment of the Jews<sup>53</sup>. The Christians had not been wiser than the Jews nor had they observed God's commandments more diligently, on the contrary, they had done worse than the Jews. Instead of bestowing mercy on them and trying to convince them of their unrighteousness by their own righteousness, the Christians had used no mercy against God's people but by their own unrighteousness had hardened the Jews in their iniquity. Moreover, fixing their eyes not upon themselves but upon the Jews, not seeing the beam in their own eyes but the mote that was in the Jews' eyes,

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<sup>50</sup> See, for example, his letter to Hartlib, 14 February 1662, in James Crossley (ed.), *The Diary and Correspondence of Dr. John Worthington*, Vol. II (1847), pp. 108-109.

<sup>51</sup> *An Awakening Warning*, p. 26.

<sup>52</sup> See *Miqweh Israel*, in Wolf, *Menasseh Ben Israel's Mission*, p. 53.

they had tried to justify themselves by considering in their minds that their deeds were a just punishment because the Jews had rejected Christ. So in raging against the Jews, they argued, one could not sin. They even persuaded themselves that in their afflicting, crucifying and killing of the Lord's people they did His work and rendered His vengeance (Joel 3:4). But once the Lord would do to the oppressors of the Jews as He formerly had done to His people: He would visit them, discovering their abominations. As they had exercised no mercy towards the Jews, so nobody would pity them. As they had done, so it would be requited to them, in the cup they had drunk to others, would it be drunk to them, even the double thereof (Rev. 18:6)<sup>54</sup>.

From this passage it is clear that Serrarius was deeply indignant with those Christians who fancied that by oppressing the Jews they did a divine work. It was not to be denied that the Jews had sinned by rejecting Christ, but it was the Lord Himself Who had already punished them by having led them captive among all nations. Let no man presume to render God's vengeance by persecuting and killing the Jews, He did render His vengeance Himself and did not need any help from the Christians. Furthermore, Christ had not been crucified by the Jews alone, the gentiles were also involved in this crime. Moreover, it was absolutely improper to treat this nation cruelly, because it was the source of all benefits to the Christians. In their turn the oppressors of the Jews would also receive a divine punishment: Babylon would be destroyed for ever.

His vehement condemnation of the Christian ill-treatment of the Jews is an undeniable proof of his affection for the Jews – certainly when seen against the background of his time. His philo-Judaism goes hand in hand with a very critical view of the Christian attitude towards the Jews. It was no wonder, as the pointed out, that the latter cherished a deep aversion against Christianity.

However, not all Christians were to be blamed for persecuting the Jews: the oppressors of the Jews were to be found among the "false" Christians. Since the time the Jews were persecuted by Christians, true Christianity had apostatized. The Fourth Beast of Daniel, the "world", had not only trampled upon the Jews but also on the "true" Christians. Those Christians even committed violence in the name of God and Christ, calling their work "holy": a telling example was the so-called "Holy" Inquisition, an institution by which so much innocent blood had been shed in Portugal,

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<sup>53</sup> The tract by the millenarian Robert Maton, *Israel's Redemption* (London, 1642) was present in Serrarius' library. On his ideas and those of Roger Williams, see Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, pp. 100-101, 172, 186-187.

<sup>54</sup> *An Awakening Warning*, p. 27.

Spain and the Netherlands. Undoubtedly Serrarius had in mind his own family history as well as the sad stories of Jewish friends like Menasseh. So Jews and true Christians shared the same fate, both of them being oppressed by false Christians. Christ, His Apostles, and all true Christians were filled with compassion towards the Jews. Just like those early Christians the true Christians of the present – among whom Serrarius did not hesitate to reckon himself – were praying for the restoration of the Jews. Scripture showed that the deliverance from this terrible Beast of Daniel that kept both true Christians and Jews in his power would only happen when the latter would be delivered from their present captivity<sup>55</sup>. The conversion of the Jews, then, was a prerogative not only for the salvation of the Jews, but also of the true Christians.

Thus in a negative and a positive sense, both concerning their present suffering condition and their future salvation, Jews and true Christians – Menasseh and Serrarius – might be considered as brethren. Though he condemned the oppression of the Jews by the Christians, we have seen that their dispersion was regarded by Serrarius as a just punishment for their rejection of Jesus Christ as the Messiah. This was God's way of leading the Jews to the acknowledgement of the true Messiah. Through the tribulations and suffering the Jews had had to endure throughout the ages they would become humble, their hearts would soften so that they finally would accept Christ. This divine punishment, however, was not meant to last for ever: at one time God would bestow mercy again on His people and they would be restored to a glorious state. This future restoration was solely based upon God's faithfulness and grace and not on any merits or righteousness of the Jews themselves. Serrarius insisted that this restoration was the fulfillment of absolute divine promises, reminding of Menasseh's words that the hope of Israel, the hope for the coming of the Messiah, was "grounded upon the absolute Promise of the blessed God"<sup>56</sup>.

If one believed in the general conversion of the Jews, then, Serrarius argued, one should also believe in the restoration of the Israelite kingdom, of the Jerusalem temple and of Levitical worship. Like La Peyrère, Homes, William Gouge, Felgenhauer and Jean Betison – to name some authors whose works he knew – he was convinced that at one time the Jews would inhabit Palestine again, the land that was promised to their forefathers as an everlasting inheritance. This promise would be fulfilled in the last days when the people of Israel, by the blood and Spirit of Christ, would be a holy people. Referring to a kabbalistical interpretation of Gen-

<sup>55</sup> *Een Bleyde Boodschap*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>56</sup> *Apol. Resp.*, p. 17. See also Menasseh ben Israel, "To the Courteous Reader", in *Miqveh Israel* (Wolf, p. 7).

esis 15:18, 19, he tried to show that this promise to Abraham still had to be fulfilled, since those three nations of the Kenites, Kenizzites and Kadmonites had never been conquered by Israel up till then. It would only be fulfilled in the last times, as was to be inferred from that “kabbalistical treble” (*Cabalistae triplex*) of the names of those three nations (thrice P), that referred to the thrice “Kaddosh” (“Holy”) in Isaiah 6:3, apparently implying that the promise in Genesis 15 would be fulfilled when the people of Israel was truly holy<sup>57</sup>.

This kabbalistical argument Serrarius probably had heard of not from Menasseh, a great admirer of the kabbalah, but from the Jerusalem Rabbi Nathan Shapira who visited Amsterdam in 1656-1657 and was befriended by the millenarian. His interpretation of Genesis 15:18, 19, though slightly different, was known to Serrarius, who, in view of such kabbalistical notions, remarked that “though to us they are no ground of interpretation of Scripture; yet if to them [*i.e.*, the Jews] they bring forth true Gospel conclusions, we have no cause to except against their using of them”<sup>58</sup>. This however did not hinder him from using kabbalistical notions himself.

As we have seen, he believed that besides the dispersed Jews from the tribes of Juda and Benjamin the Lost Ten Tribes would also return to Palestine. The Twelve Tribes would live together again in the Holy Land. Just as God had delivered the Twelve Tribes from the bondage of Egypt, so He would deliver all of them from their present captivity. When it was said that “all Israel” would be saved, then the Ten Tribes were included. Moreover, various prophecies concerning the calling of the Jews and their return to Kanaan were addressed to the Twelve Tribes and not only to the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Quoting the standard apocryphal text 4 Esdras 13, Serrarius tried to prove that those Lost Tribes, inhabiting a country where nobody had lived before, would appear at the end of days. In short, the restoration of Israel would not take place without the Ten Tribes being present.

It was no wonder that Serrarius anxiously awaited the reports out of the Near East concerning the return of the Ten Tribes, reports which reached Europe in September/October 1665, arriving more or less simultaneously with the rumors concerning Sabbatai Sevi and Nathan of Gaza. In view of these reports he published a work called “Exposition of the First Fourteen Chapters of the Book of Isaiah”, that appeared in 1666<sup>59</sup>. In this commentary the theory about the Ten Tribes was expounded in full, con-

<sup>57</sup> *Apol. Resp.*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>58</sup> See Serrarius' letter to Dury, April 1657, in *An Information concerning the Present State of the Jewish Nation in Europe and Judea* (London, 1658), p. 12.

<sup>59</sup> *Verklaringe over des Propheten Jesaia veertien eerste capitteelen* (Amsterdam, 1666).



cluding that the return of the Ten Tribes was soon to happen. Like most millenarians he fixed his hope on 1666 as the year of the conversion of the Jews and the fall of Babylon.

Thus he brought the "noise of a multitude" (Isaiah 13:4) in connection with the rumors coming out of Barbary concerning the gathering of multitudes of Israelites who were said to be remnants of the Ten Tribes. He believed that parts of the Ten Tribes lived somewhere in Africa, for example on the coast of Guinee where, as he had heard, they did not mix with the other inhabitants nor had any commerce with them: in the night they brought merchandise to set places, in exchange for other necessities which they wanted, but they were seen by none. Some of these had gone to America; whether by boat or by miracle was not known<sup>60</sup>. Another remnant of the Ten Tribes lived in Ethiopia, beyond the river Nile, witness Zephaniah 3:10. Others again were to be found on the other side of the river "Sabbathio" (= Sambatyon). This legendary river was believed to hold the Ten Tribes captive: it flowed during weekdays with strong currents carrying great stones so that no one could cross the river then. It rested however on Sabbath day but on this day it was forbidden to the Jews to travel. So indeed it was impossible to them to leave their place of exile. The Sambatyon legend had been given new life by Menasseh, who in his *Miqveh Israel* tried to prove the existence of this river; without doubt Serrarius knew this legend from this work<sup>61</sup>.

Other Israelites were said to move through the Moroccan desert on their way to Assyria and Egypt where the Ten Tribes were believed to assemble. Serrarius rejoiced at hearing that some Israelites had been found in Arabia, sent by the Ten Tribes as their fore-runners. Some of these African Israelites were reported to have besieged Mecca<sup>62</sup>. Furthermore, the prophecy in Revelation 16:12, on the "great river Euphrates" of which the water would dry up "to prepare the way for the kings from the east", might, according to him, refer to the two tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Menasse, which had been led captive at another moment than the other tribes, living somewhere to the east of Jerusalem. They would be the first to arrive in the Holy Land. Some rumors about their journey towards Palestine had already spread<sup>63</sup>.

All those reports, both about the Ten Tribes and about Sabbatai Şevi

<sup>60</sup> *Verklaringe*, pp. 437, 438. See also his letter in *The Restauration of the Jews* (London, 1665), p. 3, in which the same story is related.

<sup>61</sup> *De Judaeorum Conversione*, p. 38. On the "Sabbaticall River", see Menasseh ben Israel, *Miqveh Israel*, in Wolf, pp. 35-38.

<sup>62</sup> See Serrarius' letter to Dury, October 1665, published in Scholem, *Sabbatai Şevi*, pp. 344-346.

<sup>63</sup> *Verklaringe*, pp. 442, 443.

and his prophet Nathan, were regarded by Serrarius as relating to Jeremiah 50:4, 5: "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten". "Shall this be?", Serrarius asked, "then necessarily they must come together, even before they know Christ, in a searching condition, and a mourning and weeping frame of spirit. And shall they come together? there must be a coming up of them by a more running Spirit, as we see those in Tartary, and those in Barbary, as well as those in Judea, stirred up by the Spirit of God; even as by the Spirit of Elijah, or John the Baptist, to prepare their hearts . . ."<sup>64</sup>.

That the events of 1665/1666 were viewed seriously by him may also be apparent from the fact that he did not hesitate to compare the negative reaction of the "carnal" Christians to the accounts about Sabbatai Sevi and the Ten Tribes with the way in which the "carnal" Jews had received Christ. Those carnal Christians took exception to these accounts because they imagined Christ's second coming to happen in quite another way. For example, believing that the Ten Tribes had disappeared for good, having been mixed with other nations, and that the dispersed Jews were so divided as never to become united again, they could not accept the reports about the appearance of the Ten Tribes neither the news about the revivifying of the "dead bones of Judah". Furthermore, as they did not believe that there would appear a "prophet" or a "king" among the Jews before their conversion to Christianity, they thought it very strange to hear about a prophet and a king, in the same way as the Jews thought it strange to hear about Christ as the promised Messiah. Finally, those unregenerate Christians thought that the law had been abolished for ever and that the temple and the city of Jerusalem would never be restored. Thus, when learning about the rebuilding of the temple and of Jerusalem and the restoration of the law, they brought forth all sorts of arguments derived from Paul's letters to the Galatians, Collossians and Hebrews in order to refute this – just like the Jews employed arguments against Christ out of the Books of Moses.

Serrarius even seems to have made plans to leave Amsterdam for Palestine, arguing that from those who, like Israel, had been oppressed by Babylon and who wished to have part in the redemption of Israel, the same activity would be required as from the people of Israel: they had to come out of all corners of the world to go to the Holy Land. Those who wanted

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<sup>64</sup> Roth, "New Light", p. 138.

to flee the judgements on Babylon should leave the sooner the better, even if one had to leave behind one's dearest friends. If the Apostles had lived nowadays, they would without doubt go with the weeping and mourning Jews to their land and patiently await Christ's revelation there<sup>65</sup>. He did not leave, however – probably being too old for such an undertaking – but it was told that he instigated a number of families to sell all their property in order to go to Palestine<sup>66</sup>.

A special role was assigned by him to the Ten Tribes, once they would have assembled. Together with heirs of angels, the Ten Tribes would act as divine instruments to execute the judgement on their oppressors. They were the "sanctified ones" of the Lord (Isaiah 13:1-5), who, being chastized for a period of 2400 years, had become wholly obedient to God, a holy people, heroes, capable of judging sinners. It surely would be no human work, out of passion or ambition, but a divine one, in order to make everything subservient to God and the Lamb. It would be a work of divine revenge, for Zion's sake. Only God's will would be performed<sup>67</sup>.

Like Menasseh who believed that in the Fifth Monarchy a number of Christians would rule together with the Jews, so according to Serrarius the converted Jews, with the true Christians, would be the kings and saints in Christ's millennial kingdom. The whole world would be obedient to them. Their oppressors had received their judgement, others would be their servants. In this way "the world would be turned upside down". Babylon had fallen for ever; Zion was restored, the everlasting center of the universe.

In this Zion Christ would reign over the world, seated on the throne of David. Then "the increase of his government" (Isaiah 9:7) would be manifest upon earth as an external, visible kingdom, a government over all Twelve Tribes of Israel. Like Menasseh in his *Miqveh Israel*, Serrarius observed that there was a mystery contained in the "m" of the Hebrew word "increase", למרבה, which mem was such an "m" that was written only at the end of words. Against common practice it was put here in the middle of the word. There were different opinions about the meaning of this mystery, Serrarius said, himself ranking among those who were of the opinion that the increase of this government at first would be a hidden affair, quoting Jesus' words in Luke 17:20, 21, that one could not tell by observation when the kingdom of God would come, "for in fact the kingdom of God is among you". As if Christ said: it is a close "m", a matter that will proceed among you but will not be acknowledged by you, Pharisees,

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<sup>65</sup> See his Preface to the *Verklaringe*.

<sup>66</sup> This was related by Antoinette Bourignon, who quarreled with Serrarius about his ideas concerning the return of the Jews to the Holy Land.

<sup>67</sup> *Verklaringe*, pp. 470-476.

because it does not come with an external gesture as you expect, but with an internal spiritual strength. There will be no saying “Look, here it is!”, or “there it is!”, but this kingdom will be founded in the heart of man. Thus, according to Serrarius, the increase of this government was for some time a matter hidden to all carnal and worldly Jews and gentiles, while known to all faithful Jews and non-Jews. The time would come, however, when this increase would be revealed to the whole nation of Israel and to the whole world. In this explanation he differed from Menasseh. By the latter this mystery was interpreted as referring to the impossibility of knowing the exact time of the return of Israel to their country. From this “m”, Menasseh said, it was apparent that “the time of the Fifth Monarchy shall be hid, till the time when it shall begin”<sup>68</sup>.

The *restoratio regni Israelis* did not only mean the glorious restoration of the Jews, its meaning was much wider in scope. This restoration would be of universal importance: it was the *restitutio omnium*, all humanity and all nature would be renewed (Acts 3:21). The Spirit of the Lord would be poured out not only on the Jews, but also on mankind as a whole as well as on all creatures. All would live in harmony, the earth would be covered by knowledge of the Lord “as waters by the sea”. It would be the great Sabbath, the *Sabbat Sabbathum*, for the whole earth. Seen against this background, it is no surprise that Serrarius was so keen on signs that pointed to the restoration of Israel.

Menasseh did not live to see the excitement about the Ten Tribes, in which his own ideas played such an important part, witness also the fact that the Dutch translation of his *Miqweh Israel* was reprinted twice in 1666. He died, seemingly without having successfully finished his mission to England, in November 1657. Serrarius was prepared by his discussions with Menasseh to interpret the events of 1665 and 1666 in the same light as the latter would have done. When those years went by without the general conversion of the Jews and the fall of Babylon, he probably was somewhat disappointed too, though he had also fixed his hope on the year 1670. He died however before this date, in September 1669.

Menasseh ben Israel and Petrus Serrarius, the Jewish rabbi and the Christian millenarian, both believed that the messianic age was dawning. Their source of inspiration was the expectation of the advent of the Messiah whose appearance would mark the final redemption. It was this expectation by which Menasseh was led to go to England, hoping that by the resettlement of the Jews in this country one of the last promises before the coming of the Messiah would be fulfilled. Serrarius spread the good mes-

<sup>68</sup> *Verklaringe*, pp. 313-314; and *Miqweh Israel*, in Wolf, p. 45.

sage of Israel's imminent redemption through his writings and tried to further this by charity and love towards the Jews. For him, as a Christian, the acknowledgement of Christ by the Jews was the fundamental precondition for their glorious restoration, but he did not doubt, on the ground of God's absolute promise, that they would ever be restored. His philo-Judaism is reflected in his idea that Christian anti-millenarianism was just about the same as Jewish anti-Christianism, furthermore in his severe attack on Christian ill-treatment of the Jews; his belief in their glorious restoration; and in his conviction that *charitas practica* was the best means to their conversion. As to the theory about the Lost Ten Tribes which played such an important part in seventeenth-century messianism, in this as in other matters Serrarius was undoubtedly influenced by Menasseh's views. Of fundamental importance to his philo-Judaism were his mystic spiritualistic concepts, for example his notion about the apostasy of the Christian church and the idea of a future harmonious internal and external religion. Though he gave no sources for his views, some of his philo-Judaistic notions show a close affinity to those of that other well-known philo-Judaistic millenarian, La Peyrère, who was also the source of inspiration for Felgenhauer, Vieira, and Menasseh. The Jewish rabbi and his Christian millenarian friends were all living in the "miqweh Israel", the hope of the assembling and restoration of the Jews. There was a kind of brotherhood between them. With Menasseh and the others, Serrarius was indeed, as he called himself, a "Fellow-waiter in the Redemption of Israel, and of all mankind".

SOME REMARKS REGARDING SIX AUTOGRAPH LETTERS  
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A.K. OFFENBERG

In his Spanish *Segunda Parte del Conciliador*, which was published by the Amsterdam printer Nicolas van Ravesteyn, according to the title-page in the medieval year 5041 (1280/1281), a printing error of course for 5401 (1640/1641), Menasseh ben Israel informs his readers: "Respondi tambien a mas de CL Epistolas de hombres doctos de toda Europa, sobre muchas preclaras dudas, y questiones . . ." ("I have also answered more than 150 letters by learned men all over Europe, about many famous dilemmas and questions")<sup>1</sup>. In 1647 this number appears to have been doubled to over 300, as he tells us in Portuguese, listing all his literary activities in the last part of his *Thesouro dos Dinim*, published by his son Josef: "E mays de 300 Epistolas escritas a varios letrados e senhores, sobre muy diversas e diffi-cultosas questioens" ("And I have written more than 300 letters about many different and complicated problems to various scholars and gentlemen")<sup>2</sup>. Then, in his Spanish *Piedra gloriosa* of 1655, he ends with a catalogue of his works, and under the heading "Por imprimir" ("to be printed") he mentions "Ultra mas de 200 Epistolas escritas a personas doctas" ("Over 200 letters, written to learned persons")<sup>3</sup>. In his famous biography of Menasseh ben Israel of 1934 Cecil Roth seems to be somewhat puzzled by these figures. In his eighth chapter he says: "Hardly a week passed when he did not have several scientific epistles to compose in answer to inquiries which had reached him from various quarters; and he boasted many such treatises amongst his papers"<sup>4</sup>, adding in a footnote "that either the number 300 in 1647 is a misprint, or else that Menasseh destroyed many of these documents, as in 1655 he only gives the number as approximately 200"<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Al Lector, fol. \*\*4 recto.

<sup>2</sup> Ao Lector, fol. 1A 4 verso.

<sup>3</sup> Catalogo de mis obras, fol. L 12 recto.

<sup>4</sup> C. Roth, *A Life of Menasseh ben Israel, Rabbi, Printer and Diplomat* (Philadelphia, 1934), pp. 140-141.

<sup>5</sup> C. Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

As already indicated, the 200 letters of 1655 were mentioned as worth to be printed. So Menasseh probably had made a selection of his best or most interesting letters, and there is no reason to believe that he destroyed documents. In their recently published first volume of *Hebrew Typography in the Northern Netherlands* Dr. Fuks and Mrs. Fuks-Mansfeld observe that the most interesting of all the books Menasseh was preparing before he left for England was just this collection of 200 of his letters written to all his friends and relations<sup>6</sup>. Still, there is a problem. In the well-known letter of 31 January 1648, published for the first time in 1904 by its owner Elkan Nathan Adler (and republished afterwards in 1905 and 1908)<sup>7</sup> Menasseh complains that he can hardly find the time to reply to the four or six letters which come every week, “de los quales ni aun hago copia por me faltar el tiempo” (“of which I keep no copy, for I do not have the time”). C. Roth was well aware of this statement, as he discusses the Adler letter at length on the pages preceding his remark about the treatises Menasseh was so proud of<sup>8</sup>. So I wonder if Roth does not mean the letters which Menasseh received. This would implicate a misunderstanding of the Spanish and Portuguese quotations I just brought forward. Menasseh is probably only exaggerating a little. I suppose that he did not copy all his letters, but only those he was hoping to publish in the future, and I think we can be rather sure that the total number of letters written by Menasseh during his busy life far exceeds the 300 mentioned in 1647.

Anyway, of all these letters only very few have survived as autographs. We know of course of a number of letters edited in the course of time by different scholars, generally in translation, als already in 1650 by Thorowgood<sup>9</sup> and in 1655 by Felgenhauer<sup>10</sup>. There also exists a letter by Menasseh which was actually printed by or for him, but which I have never seen listed in any bibliography of his genuine works. I refer to the printed Portuguese letter of 2 September 1655 (the very day of Menasseh's departure for his mission to London) of which Roth discovered a copy in Venice, addressed to all persons of the Hebrew nation living in Asia and Europe<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> L. Fuks and R.G. Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew Typography in the Northern Netherlands 1585-1815. Historical Evaluation and Descriptive Bibliography*, Vol. I (Leiden, 1984), p. 112.

<sup>7</sup> E.N. Adler, “A Letter of Menasseh ben Israel”, *Jewish Quarterly Review*, XVI (1904), pp. 562-572. *Idem*, *About Hebrew Manuscripts* (Oxford, 1905), pp. 67-77 and *idem*, *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, V (1908), pp. 174-183.

<sup>8</sup> C. Roth, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-139.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Thorowgood, *Jewes in America, or probabilities that the Americans are of that race. With the removall of some contrary reasonings, and earnest desires for effectuall endeavours to make them Christian* (London, 1650), p. XVII.

<sup>10</sup> Paulus Felgenhauer, *Bonum nuncium Israeli quod offertur populo Israel et Iudae ...* (Amstelodami, 1655), pp. 87-91.

<sup>11</sup> C. Roth, “New Light on the Resettlement”, *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, XI (1928), pp. 112-142.

Besides the Adler letter I just mentioned, now in the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York<sup>12</sup>, which letter was believed originally to have been addressed to Gerardus Joannis Vossius, but since Roth has been known as the letter to Manuel Fernandes Villareal, and which was responsible for the latter's tragic death as a victim of the Portuguese Inquisition, there are three autograph letters which were discovered quite recently by Henry Méchoulan in the University Library of Leiden in Holland, and subsequently published by him. One letter of 1642<sup>13</sup> is addressed to David de Wilhem, and two letters of 1638 are addressed to Claudius Salmasius<sup>14</sup>.

On this occasion, however, I will discuss six autographs belonging to the rich collections of the Amsterdam University Library<sup>15</sup> which are certainly not unknown to the learned world but which, I think, deserve republication for several reasons.

Just like the other autographs these letters were written in Spanish: one to Gerardus Joannis Vossius, dated 4 June 1638, four to his son Isaac Vossius, between January 1651 and February 1655, and one to Hugo Grotius of 25 December 1638. These six letters are part of the library of the Remonstrant Church of Amsterdam, which library was incorporated into the University Library in 1878. Recently an interesting contribution to the history of the library of the Remonstrant Community was published by Dr. S.B.J. Zilverberg<sup>16</sup>. From this article it appears that the Remonstrant Community was officially founded in 1630. In 1634 a Seminary was opened, closely connected with the Athenaeum Illustre of Amsterdam (a college, with G.J. Vossius and Caspar Barlaeus as its first professors). In 1636 it was decided to establish a library. Very little is known, however, about the earliest history of this library. Its earliest catalogue, in manuscript, dates from 1731. A number of Remonstrants showed their interest in the

<sup>12</sup> A. Marx in: *Register [of] The Jewish Theological Seminary of America*. Reports on New Acquisitions 1923-24, p. 34. Reprinted in A. Marx, *Bibliographical Studies and Notes on Rare Books and Manuscripts in the Library of The Jewish Theological Seminary of America*. Ed. with an introd. by M.H. Schmelzer (New York, 1977), p. 32.

<sup>13</sup> H. Méchoulan, "A propos de la visite de Frédéric-Henri, Prince d'Orange, à la synagogue d'Amsterdam. Une lettre inédite de Menasseh ben Israel (1604-1657) à David de Wilhem, suivie de la traduction française du discours de bienvenue", *Lias*, V (1978), pp. 81-86.

<sup>14</sup> H. Méchoulan, "Lorsque Saumaise consultait Menasseh ben Israel: deux lettres inédites du rabbin d'Amsterdam à l'humaniste de Leyde", *Studia Rosenthaliana*, XIII (1979), pp. 1-17.

<sup>15</sup> Manuscript Department, call numbers III c 4, pp. 94-96; III e 9 (31, 37, 76, 193).

<sup>16</sup> S.B.J. Zilverberg, "De bibliotheek van de Remonstrantse Gemeente Amsterdam", *Theologie in de Universiteitsbibliotheek van Amsterdam*. Bijdragen over de collecties en verwante verzamelingen, alsmede Doopsgezinde Adversaria, verschenen bij het afscheid van S. Verheus als conservator van de kerkelijke collecties. (Jubilee-Volume S. Verheus) (Amsterdam, 1985), pp. 47-51.



library by presenting gifts. Frans van Limborch, for instance, donated in 1716 an important collection of documents from his grandfather Gerardus Joannis Vossius, his sons Dionysius, Matthaeus and Isaac and his relative Franciscus Junius. The four letters by Menasseh to Isaac Vossius, librarian and teacher of Greek to Queen Christina of Sweden, form part of this donation of 1716. Some sixteen years later, in 1732, the burgomaster of Bergen op Zoom, Cornets de Groot, decided to present the library with the rich collection of documents which once belonged to his famous ancestor, the Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius. In this collection the two other autograph letters by Menasseh, to Grotius and to Gerardus Joannis Vossius are to be found. However, a catalogue of this interesting collection was not available for a long period, and the learned world had to wait until 1849 for the first printed catalogue by P. Scheltema. Still, the letters by Menasseh to Isaac Vossius were not completely unknown, since J. Arckenholtz had already mentioned them in 1751 in his work on Queen Christina<sup>17</sup>, and Steinschneider<sup>18</sup> and Kayserling<sup>19</sup> knew about these letters in the 1850s.

Of importance for the Remonstrant Library was H.C. Rogge's interest. He published some new catalogues on special aspects of the history of the Remonstrants, and became librarian of the Amsterdam University Library in 1878. In the same year he made an agreement with the Elders of the Remonstrant Church for incorporation of their library into the University Library, on a permanent loan basis. In the following years preparations were made for a detailed catalogue of all the letters in the University Library. Originally this work was carried out by J. Hellendoorn and it was probably in the 1890s that Hellendoorn rediscovered the four letters by Menasseh to Isaac Vossius<sup>20</sup>. He immediately informed J.M. Hillesum who, from 1890 through 1930, was the keeper of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, the famous Jewish collection which was part of the University Library since 1880. Hillesum was very interested in the life and work of Menasseh ben Israel and he published a biographical sketch on Menasseh in the 1899 Annual of the Society "Amstelodamum", in which he included a Dutch translation of two of the four letters<sup>21</sup>. It is my impression that this

<sup>17</sup> J. Arckenholtz, *Mémoires concernant la reine Christine de Suède*. Vol. 1 (Amsterdam-Leipzig, 1751), pp. 303-304.

<sup>18</sup> M. Steinschneider, *Catalogus librorum hebraeorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana* (Berolini, 1852-1860), col. 1648-1649.

<sup>19</sup> M. Kayserling, "Manasse ben Israel und die Königin Christine von Schweden", *המכיר Hebraische Bibliographie. Blätter für neuere und ältere Literatur des Judenthums*, II (1859), p. 112.

<sup>20</sup> This part of the catalogue appeared much later: *Catalogus der handschriften [in de] Bibliotheek der Universiteit van Amsterdam*, Vol. IV, 1. Brieven A-M (Amsterdam, 1911), p. 263.

<sup>21</sup> J.M. Hillesum, "Menasseh ben Israel", *Amsterdamsch Jaarboekje voor 1899* (Amsterdam [ca. 1898/99]), pp. 26-56.

confrontation with Menasseh was the starting point for Hillesum to a whole series of important studies on his life and work, culminating in an impressive exhibition in 1927 on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of Menasseh's printing press. It might also be called a remarkable fact that the Jewish Historical Society of England in 1908 invited Hillesum to give a paper on the four letters on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the Mocatta Library in London. Unfortunately very little is known about this lecture, as it was never published. Only a summary was published in the Dutch newspaper *Algemeen Handelsblad* of 27 May 1908, giving a few details<sup>22</sup>. One of these details is relevant here: in his letter of 8 February 1655 Menasseh writes to Isaac Vossius, who was no longer a librarian in Stockholm because Christina had abdicated and was in the Southern Netherlands, in Antwerp and Brussels, while Vossius lived in The Hague. Menasseh probably knew that Vossius intended to visit or write to Christina, and he informed him about the many problems he had had with the payment of the books he had sent to Stockholm. As the former Queen still had not paid him, he had visited Antwerp for 15 days to explain his problem to Christina, and she had promised him the money and asked him to inform her former librarian and teacher about it<sup>23</sup>. So Hillesum found a strong indication in this letter that Menasseh's visit to Christina, which in a number of earlier studies (*e.g.*, by Kayserling<sup>24</sup>) had been connected with the same noble intentions Menasseh showed somewhat later on when visiting Cromwell in England, in fact had nothing to do with the poor refugees from eastern Europe who were trying to settle in Sweden, but everything with his own financial situation.

The Sephardi *Haham* in London, Moses Gaster, was among Hillesum's audience. According to Roth's biography of Gaster<sup>15</sup> this scholar had a stubborn and combative personality, and reading between the lines of the summary of Hillesum's lecture clearly indicates that Gaster strongly disapproved of this materialistic vision. To his luck poor Jeremiah Hillesum was supported by Elkan Adler, but I wonder if this rabbinic rage could have had something to do with the fact that Hillesum's text was never printed and that he never fulfilled his promise to publish the original Spanish text of the letters.

<sup>22</sup> *Algemeen Handelsblad*, Vol. 81 (1908), Nr. 25537, p. 13. Cf. *Jewish Chronicle* of 29 May 1908, p. 23.

<sup>23</sup> About Menasseh ben Israel and Queen Christina see David S. Katz, "Menasseh ben Israel's Mission to Queen Christina of Sweden, 1651-1655", *Jewish Social Studies*, XLV (1983/4), pp. 57-72.

<sup>24</sup> M. Kayserling, *Menasse ben Israel. Sein Leben und Wirken. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Juden in England. Aus den Quellen dargestellt* (Berlin, 1861), pp. 47-49.

<sup>25</sup> *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol. 7. Jerusalem, 1971, col. 332-334.

In the meantime, another scholar, and many times opponent of Hillesum, had become aware of the importance of the four letters, namely the Portuguese Cardozo de Bethencourt. (It is remarkable, by the way, that this author, as far as I know, never reveals his first name, and I have never seen a bibliography or catalogue listing his works, in which his first names are mentioned. A closer look at the great Portuguese encyclopaedia makes clear that he was called João Leão<sup>26</sup>.) In 1904 J.L. Cardozo de Bethencourt published an interesting and well-documented study on the four letters. He left the first two letters to Hillesum but published the Spanish text of the two remaining letters with a French translation<sup>27</sup>. Hillesum never returned to the subject, and so the two letters of 1651 have only been published in Dutch translation.

Two more letters by Menasseh ben Israel were added to the Remonstrant library in 1737, one to Gerardus Joannis Vossius, Isaac's famous father, and one to Hugo Grotius, but they were only discovered in this century and listed in the seventh volume of the catalogue of letters in the Amsterdam University Library by M.B. Mendes da Costa. This volume was published in 1923<sup>28</sup>. Both letters were not published in Spanish until 1973, when they were printed in the ninth volume of B.L. Meulenbroek's correspondence of Hugo Grotius, without translation and with some rather short notes<sup>29</sup>.

Now that the historical background of the discovery of Menasseh's letters has been given, some general remarks may follow. It is not my intention to analyze the six letters here one by one, as preparations for a facsimile edition with full transcription, translation and commentary have just begun.

J.L. Cardozo de Bethencourt lists as one of the characteristics of these letters the very fine handwriting as a result of Menasseh's myopia. Looking at the original letters, however, one is amazed about this statement, as they have been written in a very firm and legible hand. Therefore I can only conclude that Cardozo de Bethencourt was so strongly influenced by the impression made upon him by the well-known portrait-etching by Rembrandt from 1636 (Bartsch 269), that he observed a non-existent char-

<sup>26</sup> *Grande Enciclopédia Portuguesa e Brasileira*, Vol. 4. (Lisboa, etc. [ca. 1936]). I wish to thank Mr. J.H. Copenhagen, Jerusalem, for this information.

<sup>27</sup> J.L. Cardozo de Bethencourt, "Lettres de Menasseh ben Israel à Isaac Vossius (1651-1655)", *Revue des Etudes Juives*, XLIX (1904), pp. 98-109.

<sup>28</sup> *Catalogus der handschriften [in de] Bibliotheek der Universiteit van Amsterdam*, Vol. VII, *De handschriften, krachtens bruikleencontract in de Universiteitsbibliotheek berustende* (Amsterdam, 1923), p. 6, Nr. 40.

<sup>29</sup> B.L. Meulenbroek, *Briefwisseling van Hugo Grotius*, Vol. 9 (1638) ('s-Gravenhage, 1973) (Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën, Grote Serie No. 142), pp. 774-776; 801-804.

acteristic. This portrait – also used for the poster of this conference – represents a man who is possibly short-sighted. There is, however, these last years, some discussion in the world of art historians whether this portrait does not represent somebody else, as the name of Menasseh (in most cases erroneously given as Samuel Menasseh ben Israel) was not connected with this portrait until 1751. Maybe the firm handwriting of Menasseh's letters can support this theory<sup>30</sup>.

A more important problem is the question of the languages Menasseh used in his letters. Is it not very surprising that all these letters addressed to humanists, used as they were to a correspondence in Latin, were written in the Spanish language? Henry Méchoulan studied this problem in 1980 and he quotes Samuel Sorbière in his *Sorberiana* of 1684, who remarks that Menasseh was not very well versed in Latin<sup>31</sup>. This is in contradistinction with Kayserling's opinion, who stated that there is no reason to believe "that he was not the author of the Latin works to which he laid claim, and which possibly he produced with the slight help of learned coadjutors". Menasseh himself explicitly states in the Dedication to the Spanish edition of his *מקוה ישראל* (*Hope of Israel*) of 1650, that this book was originally written in Latin<sup>32</sup>. In the introduction to *De la Fragilidad Humana* of 1642 he proudly informs the reader that he is well at home in Latin and Greek literature<sup>33</sup>. And, furthermore, if Roth is right in that the Adler letter was addressed to Manuel Fernandes Villareal, a typical Portuguese, then why does Menasseh not write to him in what he himself calls his mother's language, Portuguese, while, on the other hand, the printed letter discovered in Venice, has been written in that language? Questions I cannot resolve at the moment.

A very interesting detail is to be found in the letter to Isaac Vossius of 10 March 1651, in which Menasseh informs him that he has just finished the Spanish translation of the four volumes of the atlas by Johannes Jans-

<sup>30</sup> E.F. Gersaint, *Catalogue raisonné de toutes les pièces qui forment l'oeuvre de Rembrandt*. Mis au jour, avec les augmentations nécessaires par P.C.A. Helle et J.P. Glomy (Paris, 1751), p. 195, No. 249. – Already in 1909, the Rembrandt specialist J. Six warned that the attribution by Gersaint is unreliable in his article "Gersaints lijst van Rembrandts prenten", in *Oud-Holland. Nieuwe bijdragen voor de geschiedenis der Nederlandsche kunst etc.*, XXVI (1909), p. 98.

<sup>31</sup> H. Méchoulan, "Le problème du Latin chez Menasseh ben Israel à propos d'une lettre inédite à Beverovicus et quelques explications religieuses et politiques", *Studia Rosenthaliana*, XIV (1980), pp. 357-358. – The quotation from Sorbière had been published already by J.M. Hillesum in his "Bijdrage tot de bibliographie van Menasseh ben Israel's geschriften", *Het Boek*, XVI (1927), pp. 357-358.

<sup>32</sup> Fol. [• 3] verso: "Mas como de nuevo persona de gran calidad y letras de Inglaterra, me obligasse a que sobre ello escriviesse más largo hize en lengua Latina este tratado, . . .".

<sup>33</sup> Fol. : (4 verso: "Por que yo (seame licito hablar desta manera) non solamente estoy razonablemente informado en nuestras cosas, mas aun en lo que escrivieron Griegos y Latinos".

sonius. In this context C. Roth remarks: "At the same time, he had to do a certain amount of hack work. Thus, for example, he was engaged in 1651 on a Spanish translation of the gargantuan Atlas of Jan Jansson, though the work never actually saw the light"<sup>34</sup>. (In a note Roth mentions a tradition where Menasseh is known as a watchmaker.) But the Spanish atlas, translated by Menasseh, *does* exist. In 1984 the Amsterdam University acquired as a gift the splendid 4-volume edition of the *Nuevo Atlas o Theatro de Todo el Mundo de Juan Janssonio*, which was published in 1653<sup>35</sup>. It is not so remarkable that Roth did not know about its existence, as there are only four copies known today (two in America, one in Madrid and one in Amsterdam now). However, the name of Menasseh is not mentioned in the work. It is not yet clear from which language he translated it, because the atlas previously appeared in Latin, Dutch, German and French.

To conclude with another interesting detail, attention may be called to a wax seal of Menasseh ben Israel found in the letter to Isaac Vossius of 2 February 1652. Although not very clearly visible, an enlarged photograph reveals the same symbol he used as one of his best-known printer's marks: the pilgrim with the Portuguese legend "apercebido como hu(m) romeiro" ("prepared as a pilgrim"). Some letters of the same text are visible on this black wax seal as well.

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<sup>34</sup> C. Roth, *A Life of Menasseh ben Israel*, pp. 70 and 318.

<sup>35</sup> J. Werner, "Universiteitsbibliotheek van Amsterdam ontvangt een Spaanse Janssonius (1653)", *Caert-Thresoor. Tijdschrift voor de geschiedenis van de kartografie in Nederland*, IV (1985), pp. 10-11.

## MENASSEH BEN ISRAEL: ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ZOHAR AND LURIANIC KABBALAH

JOSEPH DAN

The main purpose of this discussion is an attempt to clarify Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel's attitude towards the kabbalah and the main Hebrew mystical sources on the background of his time and his other ideological positions. The question is: Can we explain Menasseh's positions as resulting from the customary attitudes of the rabbinic scholars in Europe in the first half of the seventeenth century, or did he add to the accepted norms a specific dimension of his own? Can he be classified as a contributor of an original viewpoint in this field, or is he just one more example of a typical intellectual position?

*Nishmat Hayyim*, obviously, is our most important source for Menasseh's attitude towards Jewish mysticism, not only because of the wealth of material included in it, but especially because this book was written by the author in Hebrew, intended for the Jewish intellectual public, and thus does not necessarily contain apologetic elements derived from Menasseh ben Israel's need to present Judaism before the non-Jews in an appropriate manner. One may assume that the author felt free, when writing this work on human psychology and eschatology, to reveal the full scope of his ideological positions. On the other hand, one may assume that Menasseh ben Israel did not forsake his deep sense of responsibility towards Judaism, struggling in a hostile atmosphere even when writing in Hebrew for his fellow scholars.

In a previous paper<sup>1</sup> I tried to show that the main two ideological drives which are expressed in *Nishmat Hayyim* are an attempt to prove that the belief in the soul's eternity is a fundamental one in Judaism, both in the Bible and in all subsequent Jewish classical works, and that this belief is identical to that of Plato and his followers, from ancient Greece to contemporary Christianity. In this way he tries to denote a basic identity in religious conceptions between Judaism and classical philosophy and its

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<sup>1</sup> "The Concepts of Evil and Demonology in *Nishmat Hayyim*", in *Studies in Aggadah and Jewish Folklore in Honor of Prof. Dov Noy*, ed. by J. Dan and I. Ben-Ami (Jerusalem, 1983), pp. 263-274 (in Hebrew).

followers among non-Jewish thinkers throughout history. Jewish mystical sources are integrated into this picture by Menasseh's insistence, when analyzing scores of sources, that the same attitude towards the soul's eternal existence is to be found in the Zohar and other classics of Jewish mysticism.

Menasseh ben Israel does not reveal in this work any doubt concerning the authority or antiquity of the works of Jewish mysticism. He did not follow his contemporary, Rabbi Judah Aryeh of Modena, who dedicated a significant part of his prolific writing to proving that the Zohar was not an ancient work but written in Spain in the Middle Ages, and to deny the authority of both the works and the teachers of Jewish mysticism. *Ari Nohem*, Modena's main work on this subject, is almost a contemporary work with *Nishmat Hayyim*<sup>2</sup>, yet on this central point they differ completely. Menasseh ben Israel does not cast the least doubt on the origins of the Zohar, and praises it as one of the greatest creations of the age of the Tannaim<sup>3</sup>. Rabbi Isaac Luria, the great mystic from Safed, whose new, revolutionary mystical myth became central in the kabbalah of the seventeenth century, receives only praise in *Nishmat Hayyim*.

Menasseh ben Israel quoted the Zohar extensively in *Nishmat Hayyim*; indeed, when reading this work one may get the impression that the Zohar is the main representative, besides the Talmud, of ancient Judaism. Most of the quotations refer to the Zohar's descriptions of the history of the human soul, in which Menasseh finds support for his neo-Platonic attitudes. But the large number of Zohar quotations and interpretations enables us to obtain a more comprehensive view of the author's understanding of this mystical work. The wealth of material denotes not only what Menasseh ben Israel derived from the Zohar, but also what he did not use and, most probably, completely rejected. Four major themes of the Zohar are conspicuous in their absence in *Nishmat Hayyim*.

1. A large part of *Nishmat Hayyim* is dedicated to the evil powers, their actions and their origins, especially demons and spirits. *Nishmat Hayyim* is probably the largest Hebrew anthology of demonology of the period. Many chapters are dedicated exclusively to the description and analysis of specific demonological phenomena. And yet, the Zoharic concept of the origin of evil powers – the Sitra Ahra, "The Other Side" (meaning the left side), the divine evil system of emanations, which is the center of the

<sup>2</sup> The book was written in 1639, but published only in 1929 (in Jerusalem, by N. Libowitz). See G. Scholem, *Kabbalah* (Jerusalem, 1974), p. 78, and I. Tishby, *Mishnat ha-Zohar*, vol. I (Jerusalem, 1949), pp. 49-51.

<sup>3</sup> As he states in the conclusion of the book (and several times in other places): "I have sworn allegiance to Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai (the 'author of the Zohar' according to traditional belief) and I shall not betray my faith".

Zohar's mythology of the struggle between good and evil<sup>4</sup> – this is completely absent from *Nishmat Hayyim*. The demonic powers are presented as a part of the created world, their importance derived from the fact that their analysis can denote some basic facts of human psychology, but they have no connection with any central Satanic power in the divine world. Menasseh ben Israel did not find it impossible to differentiate between the Zohar's descriptions of the powers of evil and its mythology concerning their origin and purpose in the world. He chose in complete freedom whatever suited him, and rejected other elements.

2. Even though *Nishmat Hayyim* deals with eschatology as a major subject, Menasseh ben Israel completely ignored the Zohar's descriptions of national eschatology, the messianic myth. He used only material pertaining to personal, individual eschatology of the soul, completely ignoring the Zohar's messianism<sup>5</sup>.

3. One of the most prominent characteristics of the Zohar's descriptions of the divine world is the bi-sexual nature of the divine powers. The relationship between the male and female elements in the divine realm serves as the key for the Zohar's interpretation of processes both in the divine world and on earth. Human ethics and religious observance are explained in the Zohar as Man's participation in the process of re-uniting the separated divine bride and bridegroom, and the strife to save the female element, the Shekhinah, from the clutches of the Satanic powers, which try to enslave her<sup>6</sup>. This myth is completely absent from *Nishmat Hayyim*, even though many of the Zoharic quotations brought by Menasseh are interwoven in the Zohar itself within this myth. There can be little doubt that Menasseh ben Israel did this selection consciously and deliberately, attempting to remove any trace of this central Zoharic myth from his presentation.

4. The last Zoharic element which is absent from *Nishmat Hayyim* certainly is not the least: The concept of the ten sephirot, the ten divine emanations which constitute the divine pleroma in the Zohar as well as in the kabbalah in general. The history of the kabbalah begins with *Sefer ha-Bahir*, *The Book of Light*, late in the twelfth century, where the system of the ten divine powers is first presented, and throughout its history this system became the most characteristic element of the kabbalah, often identifying kabbalists and separating them from non-kabbalists<sup>7</sup>. Menasseh's exten-

<sup>4</sup> Concerning the Zohar's conception of evil, see Tishby, *Mishnat ha-Zohar*, I, pp. 285-379.

<sup>5</sup> A recent study of this element in the Zohar was published by Y. Liebes: "The Messiah of the Zohar – The Messianic Figure of Rabbi Simeon Bar Yohai", in *The Messianic Idea in Jewish Thought* (Jerusalem, 1982), pp. 87-236 (in Hebrew).

<sup>6</sup> See Tishby, *Mishnat ha-Zohar*, I, pp. 219-263.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 131-161, and Scholem, *Kabbalah*, pp. 96-116.



sive quotations from the kabbalah and particularly the Zohar are carefully chosen from sections in which this basic system is either absent or can be ignored in the translation from the Aramaic or the interpretation which follows the quotations. This could be regarded as somewhat surprising, because the ten divine emanations do contain some neo-Platonic elements, and indeed the whole system may have developed in the early kabbalah in the Middle Ages under the impact of Christian neo-Platonism<sup>8</sup>. Yet Menasseh ben Israel, despite his devotion for these sources, chose to ignore the very heart of the kabbalah.

It should be emphasized that even though Menasseh rejected these central Zoharic ideas and systems, he did not include in his book even the least hint of criticism and objection to them. He pretends not to notice their existence, as if he was faithfully following and praising the ancient rabbinic work of mysticism, without accepting even one element from the four main ideas of this work.

When we compare Menasseh's attitude towards the central ideas of the Zohar to that of earlier and contemporary kabbalists and Jewish thinkers, not all the elements which he rejected were accepted by everybody else. The radical mythology of the Zohar did not become an integral part of the spiritual world of all Jewish mystics after the publication of the Zohar at the end of the thirteenth century. Some basic ideas, which are central to the Zohar but did not hold an important place in pre-Zoharic kabbalah, did not become an integral part of kabbalah even after the Zohar spread and became the classical source of kabbalistic ideas.

The messianic element, which was developed in the Zohar in a radical manner, is hardly found at all in pre-Zoharic kabbalah. G. Scholem proved that the early kabbalists were not interested in a national, apocalyptic redemption because of their concentration on individual salvation through mystical experience and unity with the Godhead conceived mainly as the Creator rather than the Redeemer. The "secret of genesis" was the main subject of their speculations, rather than cosmic eschatology<sup>9</sup>. This trend, to which the Zohar is, at least in part, an exception, was not changed after the Zohar, and many kabbalistic works written between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries did not emphasize the myth of messianic redemption in the Zoharic manner.

In the same way, the dualistic mythology of the Sitra Ahra, the divine evil system, which the author of the Zohar adopted from the works of

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<sup>8</sup> G. Scholem analyzed the impact of neo-Platonism on the early kabbalah in many sections of his *Ursprung und Anfänge der Kabbala* (Berlin, 1962).

<sup>9</sup> See G. Scholem, "The Messianic Idea in Kabbalism", included in the collection of his essays *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York, 1971), pp. 37-48.

Rabbi Isaac ha-Cohen of Castile, who developed the system of "the emanations on the left" in the second half of the thirteenth century<sup>10</sup>, was not accepted by most kabbalists both before the Zohar and after its publication. The search for the roots of evil in the innermost parts of the divine world was not a common feature of kabbalistic thought, and many kabbalists who otherwise accepted the Zohar and wrote commentaries on it rejected it completely. The clearest example is the great sixteenth-century kabbalist in Safed, Rabbi Moses Cordovero, who in his many detailed kabbalistic expositions, all of them relying on the Zohar and interpreting it, insisted on the search for the source of evil within the created world and human deeds, without allowing any basis for it in the divine realm<sup>11</sup>. Cordovero in this attitude represents most of the kabbalists up to and including the sixteenth century, though not all of them; especially in the last years of the fifteenth century and during the sixteenth, there is a re-emergence of the myth of the evil powers in kabbalistic works, especially those written by mystics who worked under the impact of the great upheaval of the expulsion from Spain in 1492.

Sexual symbolism, which is certainly one of the most obvious elements in the world of the Zohar, was also almost unknown before the Zohar, and did not become universal after it. Even in the sixteenth century, great kabbalists like Rabbi Meir Ibn Gabai, when expounding the same Zoharic ideas, minimized the use of such symbolism. All kabbalists since the thirteenth century accepted the fundamental distinction between the male and female elements in the world of the divine sephirot; but most of them did not develop the sexual possibilities inherent in such a system, even after the Zohar made it the center of its mythology.

This background of a variety of attitudes within the kabbalah towards Zoharic mythology and symbolism tends to put Menasseh ben Israel in a position of one more dissenter from the stark myths of the Zohar and a follower of a less radical kabbalah. The absence of messianism, sexual symbolism and dualistic mythology does not necessarily denote that the author rejected the kabbalah as a whole; great kabbalists shared, at least to some extent, Menasseh's reservations concerning these parts of Zoharic symbolism.

This cannot be said concerning the fourth element which Rabbi Menasseh did not accept from the Zohar: The system of the ten sephirot. This system has been the element which identified kabbalists since the end of

<sup>10</sup> The early development of this myth is described in my study "The Beginnings of the Messianic Myth in 13th Century Kabbalah", in *Messianism and Eschatology* (Jerusalem, 1984), pp. 239-252 (in Hebrew).

<sup>11</sup> See G. Scholem, *Kabbalah*, pp. 401-405 (article written by J. Ben-Schlomo), and I. Tishby, *Netivey Emunah u-Minut* (Ramat-Gan, 1964), pp. 23-29 (in Hebrew).

the twelfth century. There were a few Jewish mystics in the thirteenth century, the most prominent among them was Rabbi Abraham Abulafia, who did not adopt this symbolism as the basis of their speculations, but on the whole kabbalah and the ten sephirot were regarded as one and the same. There were many variations in the interpretation and presentation of the system, but the basic concepts prevailed throughout the history of the kabbalah in the Middle Ages and modern times. When Menasseh ben Israel rejected these symbols and tried to present the Zohar without using them, he completely departed from the traditions of the kabbalah, and proved himself to be non-kabbalist.

If, indeed, Menasseh ben Israel was not a kabbalist – as proven by his attitude towards the system of the ten sephirot – why did he use the Zohar as one of the principal sources, why did he rely on this work more than on almost any other single source in *Nishmat Hayyim*? Why did he bother to praise the Zohar and the kabbalah so highly? Why did he pretend to follow kabbalistic traditions when in fact he rejected them almost completely?

A partial answer to this question can be found in Menasseh's attitude to sources in general. It seems that both in *Nishmat Hayyim* and in many of his other works Menasseh ben Israel adopted the attitude that one may use an idea, a sentence, a symbol from any theological or philosophical work without being committed to accept its general outlook and ideology. His constant reliance not only on classical Greek and Latin sources, but also on Christian ones, ancient, medieval and contemporary – sources which undoubtedly contained many elements which he rejected completely – proves that he did not feel bound by the general characteristics of the works he quoted. He had a clear purpose when writing *Nishmat Hayyim*, and everything he wrote, every work he used, ought to serve that purpose. He tried not only to prove that the soul was eternal, but also that Judaism throughout its history believed in this, and that the great minds of all times, all nations and all faiths also believed it. Not only the veracity of his psychological analysis has to be proved, but also the universal dimensions of its acceptance.

This basic attitude towards sources in general enabled Menasseh ben Israel to use the Zohar without feeling obliged to adopt its fundamental symbols. It can explain why he did not neglect the Zohar and kabbalistic literature in general, why he quoted stories about Rabbi Isaac Luria without dealing with his revolutionary new kabbalistic mythology, and his frequent quotes from other mystical sources. But it cannot explain why Menasseh ben Israel tried to pretend to be a Zoharic kabbalist, why he relied on the Zohar so heavily, why the frequent and extensive quotes from the Zohar more than from any other medieval source.

Another partial explanation might be the impact and prestige of the kabbalah at the time not only among Jews but among many Christian scholars. Since the emergence of the Christian kabbalah<sup>12</sup>, following the works of Pico della Mirandola, the kabbalah was regarded as an ancient source of universal truth, containing unimagined treasures of divine revelation. Quotations from the Zohar were more difficult to refute than those of the Bible or the Talmud, which were regarded as open to several, conflicting interpretations.

This, also, may be regarded only as a partial interpretation, for several reasons: *Nishmat Hayyim* was not written for Christians but mainly for Jews. More than that, this explanation infers that Menasseh ben Israel was not completely sincere in his reliance and praise for the Zohar, whereas this reader, at least, believes that he was.

We should also take into account the fact that since the sixteenth century the kabbalah in general, and the Zohar in particular, became an integral part of Jewish normative culture, and quoting the Zohar no longer identified the writer as a mystic. A clear example for this new attitude is to be found in the sermons of Rabbi Judah Moscatto, collected in *Nefozot Yehuda*<sup>13</sup>. Moscatto quotes the Zohar quite often, even though his basic ideological attitudes are purely rationalistic. For him, as for many other post-Renaissance Jewish preachers and thinkers, the Zohar was a part of Jewish heritage and tradition. It contained unacceptable elements, but so did the Talmud – or even the Bible itself. Using the Zohar (directly or with the assistance of intermediary sources) proved the broad horizons and culture of the speaker. Some Jewish intellectuals in Italy objected to the Zohar, but they belonged to a minority group among Jewish intellectuals. Menasseh ben Israel could be following the prevailing fashion when he quoted the Zohar; but again, this does not explain why he put it in the center of his vast collection of sources.

Did Menasseh ben Israel sense – or even share – the coming of a cultural revolution in Judaism which would place the kabbalah in the center of Jewish religious culture? Did he notice the enormous spiritual forces inherent within the new Lurianic mystical mythology? Did he sense the approach of the Sabbatean movement, to be followed later by the Hassidic movement – both kabbalistic, both relying heavily on Lurianic doctrines, and both having unprecedented impact on European Jewry?

If Menasseh ben Israel felt that the power of the mystical element within Judaism was on the rise in the middle of the seventeenth century, he was

<sup>12</sup> Scholem, *Kabbalah*, pp. 196-201 (and detailed bibliography there, pp. 209-210).

<sup>13</sup> See J. Dan, "Homiletical Literature in 16th Century Italy", in *Proceedings of the 6th World Congress of Jewish Studies*, vol. III (Jerusalem, 1976), pp. 105-110 (in Hebrew).

undoubtedly right. But he certainly could not guess the direction that this new force was going to take. For in Lurianism and Sabbateanism, which became the prominent spiritual forces in Judaism in the second half of that century, the dominant elements were those rejected completely by Menasseh: messianism, sexual symbolism, intense dualistic mythology. It is possible that Menasseh ben Israel felt an imminent change within Jewish culture; he certainly could not guess the nature and direction of that change.

# KABBALAH, PLATONISM AND PRISCA THEOLOGIA: THE CASE OF R. MENASSEH BEN ISRAEL

MOSHE IDEL

## I

The medieval Jewish mysticism commonly called kabbalah, is considered to be the result of the meeting between, and combination of, neo-Platonism and – what G. Scholem deemed to be – “Jewish gnosticism”<sup>1</sup>. As far as neo-Platonism is concerned, it is by now obvious that it has contributed a substantial part to the terminology of the emerging kabbalah and even to some of its basic concepts; the kabbalistic negative theology, its emanationalist features, possibly even the triadic structure of the *sephirot* pattern, are witnesses of a considerable impact of medieval neo-Platonism<sup>2</sup>.

However, it is worth mentioning that this twelfth-century “intrusion” cannot be regarded as a novelty in the history of Jewish thought. More than a millennium beforehand, Platonism – or Middle Platonism – exercised a decisive influence on the philosophy of Philo of Alexandria, and the result seems to be a peculiar type of Jewish mysticism<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, even “genuine” pieces of Jewish literature, namely some Talmudic and Midrashic passages, are viewed, by some scholars, as evidence of contacts with Platonic thought<sup>4</sup>. Since these Midrashic materials were frequently

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<sup>1</sup> *Kabbalah* (Jerusalem, 1974), p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> See G. Scholem, *Les origines de la Kabbale* (Paris, 1966), *sub voce*: “Platonisme”.

<sup>3</sup> David Winston, “Was Philo a Mystic”, in *Studies in Jewish Mysticism*, eds. J. Dan and F. Talmage (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), pp. 15-39. There have been attempts to demonstrate Philo’s influence on kabbalah, mainly on *Midrash ha-Ne’elam*, an early Zoharic stratum; see S. Belkin, “The Midrash ha-Ne’elam and its Sources in the Alexandrian Ancient Midrashim”, *Sura*, III (1958), pp. 25-92 and R.J.Z. Werblowsky’s critique, “Philo and the Zohar”, *Journal of Jewish Studies*, X (1959), pp. 25-44, 113-135.

<sup>4</sup> See Yitzhak F. Baer, *Israel Among the Nations* (Jerusalem, 1955) (in Hebrew), mainly ch. V-VI; Alexander Altmann, “A Note on the Rabbinic Doctrine of Creation”, *Journal of Jewish Studies*, VI-VII (1955-1956), pp. 205-206. On neo-Platonic influences in early Jewish philosophy, see A. Altmann and S.M. Stern, *Isaac Israeli – A Neoplatonic Philosopher of the Early Tenth Century* (Oxford, 1958); Giuseppe Sermoneta, “Il Neo-Platonismo nel pensiero dei nuclei Ebraici Stanziati nell’occidente latino”, in *Settimane di Studio del Centro italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo* (Spoleto, 1980), pp. 867-925.

used by the first “historical” kabbalists, and sometimes interpreted Platonically, the reception of medieval neo-Platonism seems to be an issue more complex and more intriguing than a sudden “invasion” of this brand of Platonic thought into Jewish mysticism.

Nevertheless, the visible traces of neo-Platonism, which can be detected in the early kabbalah, did not radically change what seems to me to be the basic nature of the Jewish traditions, which contributed to the emergence of kabbalah; ancient anthropomorphism and theosophy, rabbinic theurgy and ancient Jewish techniques to attain ecstatic experiences, remained the prevalent factors which moulded the further development of kabbalah. The neo-Platonic elements had generally attenuated the activation of the above-mentioned factors. Only rarely was neo-Platonism the dominant element in an important kabbalistic system; the neo-Platonic facets of the systems of R. Azriel<sup>5</sup>, R. Isaac ibn Latif<sup>6</sup> or R. David ben Abraham ha-Lavan<sup>7</sup> remained marginal aspects in early kabbalistic *Weltanschauung*. Since the beginning of the fourteenth century, an ancient Jewish legend was interpreted by kabbalists in such a manner as to confirm the affinity between the pre-Aristotelian philosophy and *veritas hebraica*, namely, kabbalah<sup>8</sup>; nevertheless, no early kabbalist has maintained that Plato or other pre-Aristotelian thinkers learned their teachings directly from Jewish masters.

However, as soon as neo-Platonism became more influential in European thought – mainly through the translations of Marsilio Ficino – kabbalah was gradually interpreted by means of neo-Platonic views. An important step in this direction is R. Jochanan Alemanno’s large-scale usage of Proclean elements in order to interpret classical kabbalistic views<sup>9</sup>. His contemporaries, R. Isaac and Judah Abravanel (Leone Ebreo), viewed kabbalah as ancient Jewish lore, which was studied by Plato in Egypt, and thus reached the gentile world<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, affinities

<sup>5</sup> Scholem, *Les origines de la Kabbale*, *passim*.

<sup>6</sup> S.O. Heller-Wilensky, “Isaac ibn Latif – Philosopher or Kabbalist?”, in *Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, ed. A. Altmann (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), pp. 200-210.

<sup>7</sup> G. Scholem, “David ben Abraham ha-laban – ein unbekannter jüdischer Mystiker”, in *Occident and Orient . . . Gaster Anniversary Volume* (London, 1936), pp. 503-508.

<sup>8</sup> See M. Idel, “The Journey to Paradise – The Metamorphosis of a Mythological Motif in Judaism”, *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore* (in Hebrew), II (1982), pp. 7-16, esp. p. 10 and p. 14, n. 32, where R. Menasseh’s usages of this legend and theory are mentioned.

<sup>9</sup> M. Idel, “The Magical and Neoplatonic Interpretations of Kabbalah in the Renaissance”, in *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. B. Cooperman (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), pp. 216-224.

<sup>10</sup> M. Idel, “Kabbalah and Ancient Philosophy in R. Isaac and Judah Abravanel”, in *The Philosophy of Leone Ebreo*, eds. M. Dorman and Z. Levi (Tel Aviv, 1985) (in Hebrew), pp. 73-112.

between the two bodies of lore are only natural, and the usage of Plato – and his later followers – in order to elucidate kabbalistic theosophy became more and more common. This process reached its peak at the end of the sixteenth and in the first half of the seventeenth century; pre-Safedic kabbalah was exposed using Renaissance neo-Platonism by R. Abraham Yagel<sup>11</sup>; R. Israel Sarug's brand of Lurianic theosophy was minuteously transposed into a "Platonic key" by R. Abraham Herrera<sup>12</sup>, and partially also by R. Joseph Shelomoh Delmedigo of Kandia<sup>13</sup>. In the writings of the three latter authors the neo-Platonic element gained such importance that some of the main features of the interpreted texts were either suppressed or quietly excluded from their expositions of kabbalah. For example, the theurgical and anthropomorphic elements were substantially attenuated and it is hard to detect any meaningful discussion of the mystical values of the commandments<sup>14</sup>. The two latter kabbalists were almost exclusively interested in Lurianic kabbalah; on the other hand Yagel focused upon the pre-Lurianic type of kabbalah, either because he was not interested in the Lurianic one, or because he was not acquainted well enough with its tenets. We may reassert that in the first half of the seventeenth century kabbalah ran into two different directions: one which consciously divorced itself from the philosophical tendencies and embraced the Lurianic tradition; and the other one, which made massive usage of Renaissance thought which served as an hermeneutical tool that aimed to acculturate either the pre-Lurianic kabbalah, or even the Lurianic views<sup>15</sup>. This second tendency naturally was connected with neo-Platonism and its satellites – hermeticism, magic, and various pagan domains of thought such as Chaldean Oracles. I should like to stress that this was one of the "legitimate" metamorphoses kabbalah underwent when it came in contact with Renaissance culture. One of the late outcomes of this neo-Platonizing perception of kabbalah is Menasseh ben Israel's view of Jewish mysticism.

<sup>11</sup> See Idel, "The Magical and Neoplatonic Interpretations" (n. 9, above), pp. 224-229.

<sup>12</sup> Alexander Altmann, "Lurianic Kabbalah in a Platonic Key", *Hebrew Union College Annual*, LIII (1982), pp. 317 ff.; K. Krabbenhoft, "Structure and Meaning of Herrera's *Puerta del Cielo*", *Studia Rosenthaliana*, XVI (1982), pp. 1-20.

<sup>13</sup> This phenomenon is obvious, and it still requires a detailed analysis.

<sup>14</sup> M. Idel, "Differing Perceptions of the Kabbalah in the 17th Century", in *Jewish Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. I. Twersky and B. Septimus (Cambridge, Mass., 1987), pp. 137-200.

<sup>15</sup> M. Idel, "Major Currents in Italian Kabbalah between 1560-1660", *Italia Judaica*, II, eds. J.B. Sermoneta and S. Simonsohn (Roma, 1986), pp. 242-262.



## II

Let us start with a short discussion of the sources of R. Menasseh's view of *prisca theologia*<sup>16</sup> as he exposed it in his *Nishmat Hayyim*<sup>17</sup>: "From him [*i.e.*, Jeremiah] Plato has received the greatest part of his wisdom, as the sages of the Greeks testify".

This statement contains no new elements in comparison to R. Isaac Abravanel's view, and it is probably borrowed from his commentary on Jeremiah<sup>18</sup>. Later on, Menasseh ben Israel compares the Midrashic view of *anamnesis*<sup>19</sup>, as it also occurs in the Zohar<sup>20</sup>, with the Platonic view, and he concludes<sup>21</sup>: "Behold that Plato's words are the very words of the kabbalists". Or, shortly afterwards, we read: "Plato, all his words confirm the view of the kabbalists"<sup>22</sup>.

We witness here an interesting process of unearthing the affinities between ancient and medieval Jewish views of *anamnesis* and their source in Plato. The broadening of the intellectual horizons by adding the Platonic sources contributed to a further perception of the real similarity between kabbalah and Platonic thought. The same approach holds true also as regards Plato's followers: Menasseh had adduced some kabbalistic texts in which the real man is the soul. Then he wrote<sup>23</sup>:

"This is the view of the true sages [namely the kabbalists] and they were followed by men of wisdom and knowledge among the Gentiles like Plato in

<sup>16</sup> On this concept, see Charles B. Schmitt, "Prisca Theologia e Philosophia Perennis: due temi del Rinascimento italiano e la loro fortuna", in *Il Pensiero del Rinascimento e il tempo nostro* (Firenze, 1970), pp. 211-236, and the bibliography referred to by him.

<sup>17</sup> *Nishmat Hayyim* (Warschau, 1876) [below: *NH*], II, 10 fol. 35c: "וממנו קבל אפלטון רב: 'יחכמו היונים מעידים'". Compare also *NH*, IV, 11, fol. 85c. On the background of the composition of this work, see Altmann, "Eternality of Punishment: A Theological Controversy within the Amsterdam Rabbinate in the Thirties of the Seventeenth Century", in *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, XL (1973), pp. 1-2, 19 ff.

<sup>18</sup> *Perush Nevi'im Aharonim* (Jerusalem, 1949), p. 305: "וחכמי היונים מעידים שדבר עמו 'אפלטון במצרים'". The sources of this view were discussed in detail in Idel, "Kabbalah and Ancient Philosophy" (n. 10 above), pp. 79-86. Menasseh quotes *verbatim* a lengthy passage from R. Isaac Abravanel's *Miphalot Elohim*, wherein Plato's study with Jeremiah is mentioned: see *NH*, I, 13, fol. 21b.

<sup>19</sup> *Niddah* 30b.

<sup>20</sup> *Zohar* III: 61b.

<sup>21</sup> *NH*, II, 10, fol. 35c: "'ראה נא איך דברי אפלטון הם עצמם דברי המקובלים'". Compare also *NH*, II, 1, fol. 28b.

<sup>22</sup> *NH*, II, 10, fol. 35d: "'אפלטון אשר בכל דבריו נשבע סדעה המקובלים'".

<sup>23</sup> *NH*, II, 14, fol. 37c: "'וכן הוא דעת כל חכמי האמת ונמשכו אחריהם רבים מאנשי החכונה והדעת בין חכמי אומות העולם כגון אפלטון בס' הטימאיון, פרופיריאן, ימבליקו פרוקלו ופלוטינו אשר כלם פה א' מסכימים שהנשמה היא כל האדם ושהגוף מעון לה'". Compare *Alcibiades*, 130. This view was quoted anonymously by R. Judah ha-Levi, *Kuzari* I, 89; IV, 3; its source in Plato's thought was already pointed out by R. Judah Moscatto in his *Commentary on Kuzari* to *Kuzari* I, 89. However, Moscatto does not mention kabbalistic sources as being consonant with the Platonic perception of the soul. See Menasseh's *The Conciliator*, tr. E.H. Lindo (London, 1842), vol. I, pp. 31-32.

*Timaeus*, Prophyria [!], Jamblico Proclo and Plotino, all of them agree that the soul is the whole man, and the body is its residence”.

Therefore, the whole neo-Platonic tradition is the result of the reception of Jewish psychology. Again the similarity between the two traditions is valid, and only the historical explanation is biased. However, again we see that a perception based upon the concept of *prisca theologia* enables a “Renaissance” thinker to disclose the phenomenological affinity between the two traditions.

The same attitude holds true also for other bodies of pagan literature; when dealing with the pre-existence of the soul our kabbalist wrote<sup>24</sup>:

“and they<sup>25</sup> were followed by Pythagoras, Hermes Trimegisto [!], Plato in his book *Epinomis* and others who had thirstily drunk from their [the Jews'] words”.

This chain of ancient theologians is well known in the Renaissance descriptions of the history of perennial philosophy. However, it seems that, again, Menasseh ben Israel used R. Isaac Abravanel's version found in *Miphalot Elohim*<sup>26</sup>. Like Abravanel our kabbalist prefers the tendency to reduce all the great theological traditions to a single one, posing the pagan philosophers as a relatively late ring in the chain beginning with Moses or even Adam. This reductionalist approach to the history of the perennial truths conceives kabbalah as a primordial lore, enhances its importance and strengthens the *veritas hebraica* in the vein of some Jewish Renaissance predecessors. The perception of some important Christian figures in the Renaissance period of two parallel chains of religious truths, the Mosaic and the pagan truth, was implicitly rejected by Menasseh ben Israel in the above-mentioned citations<sup>27</sup> and there seems to be only one exception:

<sup>24</sup> *NH*, II, 16, fol. 38a: אפלטון בספר (!) פיתאגורס הירמים טרימיגיסטו (נמשכו אחריהם פיתאגורס הירמים טרימיגיסטו (!) אפלטון בספר “כן נודלי: Compare to *idem*, II, 1, fol. 28b: “הפלוסופים הקדומים שהאמינו ונמשכו אחר קבלת רבותינו וזל כהמים טרימיגיסטו פיתאגוראש אפלטון וזלחם. See also the pertinent material adduced and analyzed by J. van den Berg, “Menasseh ben Israel, Henry More and Johannes Hoornbeeck on the Preexistence of the Soul”, in this volume.

<sup>25</sup> i.e., the kabbalists.

<sup>26</sup> *Miphalot Elohim* (Lemberg, 1863) [below: *ME*], fol. 59a-b. See Idel, “Kabbalah and Ancient Philosophy” (n. 10 above), pp. 75-79; and R. Menasseh's *The Conciliator*, I, pp. 236-237; see n. 27 below.

<sup>27</sup> See R. Menasseh's statement in *The Conciliator*, I, p. 237: “Marcellus Ficinus also says, that Plato went to Egypt and conversed with the prophets and priests of Israel who communicated to him the cabalistical secrets and mysteries of the Divine names, with many other things. John Pico Mirandola, observes, that Plato was so able a scholar, that his opinions coincided greatly with the essential of Cabala”. Though Ficino was ready to recognize the allegedly Jewish source of Platonism, he never mentioned kabbalah as Plato's source: see Raymond Marcel, *Marsile Ficin* (Paris, 1958), p. 621. R. Menasseh consciously exaggerated the role of kabbalah in Plato's formation; compare n. 26 above.

when dealing with the problem of the survival of the soul after death, Menasseh wrote<sup>28</sup>:

“Finally, ancient philosophers like Pythagoras, Plato, Arkita Jarantino<sup>29</sup>, Plotino, and Aristotle in the second part of *De Anima*, had recognized this tenet, as if the nature of the truth compelled them to believe this principle, without the reception of the Divine Law, but by means of natural light alone”.

*Prima facie*, *lumen naturale* may be interpreted as an alternative way to reach the doctrines revealed by the religious sources. However, this understanding of the text is rather misleading; acceptance of the doctrine of survival of the soul is a rather general view which, indeed, can be deduced by natural reason alone. However, some of the ancient philosophers mentioned in the last quotation are presented by Menasseh ben Israel as believing in a more specific form of survival: the belief in the transmigration of souls<sup>30</sup>. This peculiar view stems, *pace* the kabbalist, from Jewish sources<sup>31</sup>:

“It is well known throughout the world that the belief in metempsychosis is attributed by all to Pythagoras the philosopher . . . however, this belief is attributed to Pythagoras since it was novel, because it was hidden and concealed for several years and not because he was the first one who divulged it. Likewise it is the opinion of Alexander Polystor<sup>32</sup> that he learned it and heard it from Ezekiel the prophet, who was his master . . . who traded it down to his worthy disciple, who, according to Ambrosia<sup>33</sup> [!] – a sage of the sages of the gentile in an epistle addressed to Ireneus – was a Hebrew,

<sup>28</sup> NH, III, 5, fol. 77b: אפלטון, אריסטו, ארכיטא, פלוטין, אריסטו, פלוטין ואריסטו בספר השני מהנפש כאלו טבע האמת יכריחם להאמין העקר הזה בלי קבלת התורה האלהית אלא באור הטבע לבד.”

<sup>29</sup> Namely Archytas de Tarente, a disciple of Pythagoras.

<sup>30</sup> Compare the statement on Gregorius of Nice, adduced by R. Menasseh (NH, IV, 20, fol. 85b), that whoever believed in the survival of the soul also believed in the transmigration of souls: “כי כמו שכתב נרינוריא ניסיון בספר השני מהנפש בין אימות העולם כל מי שהאמין העקר הזה בהשאת הנפש, האמין גם כן אמונת הנלגל ויחד בהסכמה כללית אחו האמונות הללו.”

<sup>31</sup> NH, IV, 21, fol. 85 ab: “מדעת ואח ככל הארץ שאמונת הנלגל מתייחס בפי הכל לפיתאגורס: ונאמנם מתייחס האמונה הזאת לפיתאגורס להיות שהוא חדשה מאחר שנתעלמה ונסתרה כמה מהשנים, ולא להיות הראשון שפרסמה. וגם הוא לדעת אלכסנדר פוליסטור, למדה ונשמעה מיחזקאל הנביא אשר היה רב. . . מסר להלמידיו הנון אשר אמברוסיא, חכם מוכמי אימות העולם באגרת שלחה לאריניא, נזיר ומקיים היות הסכמה כוללת היווה עברי, וקלימנט אליכסנדריון בספר החמישי מאמת שנמול היה וכך הוא האמת כי יהודי היה וכל מה שחבר נבב ולקח מתורתיו הקדושה והקבלה האמתית.”

Compare also NH, IV, 23, fol. 86a. The assertion that Pythagoras was a Jew, based upon Ambrosius, seems to be taken from Ficino's *Opera* (Basel, 1565), vol. I, p. 30. Compare, however, *The Conciliator*, I, p. 69, where the kabbalistic belief in transmigration is presented beside that of the gentiles – Orpheus, Hermes, Pythagoras and Plato – without assuming any connections between them. Thus, in the later work NH, we witness a certain evolution in R. Menasseh's perception of the history of ancient philosophy.

<sup>32</sup> Namely Polyhistor: I could not locate this reference of Menasseh in the extant fragments of the ancient historian; see Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (Jerusalem, 1976), vol. I, pp. 159-164.

as he decided and approved that it was accepted by all; and Clement of Alexandria in his fifth book proved that he [*i.e.*, Pythagoras] was circumcised. Indeed, this is the truth, that he was a Jew, and whatever he composed he has stolen and taken over from the Holy Scripture and true kabbalah”.

Thus, according to Menasseh ben Israel Pythagoras was either of Jewish stock or had adopted the Jewish doctrine of metempsychosis. When regarding the background of this text, the previous assertion on the role of *lumen naturale* must be restricted, if not reinterpreted, as alluding to the perception of a general concept which was fashioned by the Jewish tradition.

It seems that the entire body of concepts concerning psychology was considered by Menasseh ben Israel to be Jewish in origin, kabbalistic in nature, and only later accepted by the pillars of pagan thought: Pythagoras and Plato.

This process of “Judaizing” pagan philosophy is the obvious result of the influence of previous Jewish sources – mainly R. Isaac Abravanel<sup>34</sup> and only secondarily R. Judah Moscatto. Using allegedly ancient Jewish sources – primarily mystical ones – the Jewish theologians counteracted the accepted view on the two independent chains of religious truth and aimed at imposing the esoteric *veritas hebraica* as the first foundation of all wisdom. Menasseh ben Israel seems to be the latest, and most important, representative of this tendency. In his *Nishmat Hayyim* he endeavored to convince the readers of the Hebrew source of the respectable neo-Platonic psychology. He used the pertinent kabbalistic sources, pre-Lurianic as well as Lurianic<sup>35</sup> ones, which deal with the nature of the soul, metempsychosis and exorcism, while other facets of kabbalistic lore generally remained beyond the scope of his discussions in *Nishmat Hayyim*<sup>36</sup>. When comparing

<sup>33</sup> Compare Epistle 58, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. XVI, c. 1051.

<sup>34</sup> The massive influence of the writings stemming from the Abravanel family on R. Menasseh may be due, not only to the greatness of these authors, but also to the fact that he had married an offspring of this family.

<sup>35</sup> R. Menasseh was acquainted with a relatively large number of Lurianic texts: Vital’s *Sefer ha-Kavvanot* (NH, II, 27, fol. 47b; III, 18, fol. 63d; etc.); R. Menahem Azariah of Fano’s *Asarah Ma’amarot* (IV, 10, fol. 79c; IV, 12, fol. 80a; etc.); R. Shabbetai Sheftel Horowitz’s *Shefa’ Tal* (II, 9, fol. 35ab; II, 14, fol. 37b); R. Nathan Neta Spira’s *Megalleh ‘Amukot* (II, 15, fol. 37d); and see also n. 47 below. Some information on Lurianic lore could be extracted from R. Joseph Solomon Delmedigo’s *Mazref le-Hokhmah* (see n. 53 below), or from Herrera’s *Gates of Heaven* (see *The Conciliator*, I, p. 110).

<sup>36</sup> Given the psychological focus on the book, NH only rarely deals with kabbalistic theosophy, whether the Sephirotic system or the Lurianic view of configurations (*parzufim*); see nevertheless NH, I, 10, fol. 18b; I, 17, fol. 27c; II, 15, fol. 37d. R. Menasseh was aware of the content of Luria’s *Adam Kadmon* (see n. 47 below). His acceptance of the concept of *sephirot* is evident even earlier in *The Conciliator*, I, pp. 48, 91-93, 108-111; see our discussion of p. 108 below. Compare also R. Isaac Aboab’s *Nishmat Hayyim*, a work dealing with the immortality of the soul in a kabbalistic manner without mentioning the *sephirot* of Lurianic

Hebrew texts to pagan and Christian sources, Menasseh ben Israel mainly used genuinely kabbalistic views and therefore his psychology contains an orthodox kabbalistic stand; in other words, the Hebrew kabbalistic texts were presented as including the same concepts as the non-Jewish texts. Nevertheless, these texts were not interpreted neo-Platonically in detail, as we find in the Italian Renaissance Jewish tradition as represented by Alemanno, Moscatto, Herrera or Delmedigo. They were presented as explicitly including parallels to, and implicitly being sources of, pagan philosophy.

### III

Let us turn now to another book of Menasseh ben Israel: his *The Conciliator*; here the same assumption of the basic affinity between kabbalah and neo-Platonism recurs. However, we also witness an interesting phenomenon, connected again with the writings of the Abravanel. Menasseh ben Israel uses R. Judah's discussions as kabbalistic views, without any reservations<sup>37</sup>; I shall present only one example here of this curious attitude of Menasseh's and point out Menasseh's sources<sup>38</sup>:

"The Kabbalistic theologians maintain the contrary. They say that chaos<sup>39</sup> being the universal mother, her generation proceeding from the eternal and omnipotent Father, the Almighty Creator, is everlasting; that is to say, possessing infinite succession; the inferior world in every seven thousand years, and the celestial or superior world in every fifty thousand years. This<sup>40</sup>, they say, was communicated by Adam to Seth, from him to Enoch, thence to Noah and by him to Shem; from them to Heber, by him to the Patriarchs, and afterwards confirmed to Moses and signified by the type of the six divine days of creation, which represent six thousand years<sup>41</sup>; as the Psalmist says that a day of the Lord is of that duration: 'For a thousand years in thy sight are as a day', and so also in the precepts of the Holy Law did he command the chil-

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theosophy, even though the author was a student of the kabbalist R. Abraham Herrera and translated his books (see Altmann, "Eternality of Punishment" (n. 17 above), pp. 3, 55-88. Compare, however, Joseph Dan, "The Doctrine of Evil and the Demonology in R. Menasseh ben Israel's Book *Nishmat Hayyim*", in *Studies in Aggadah and Jewish Folklore*, eds. I. Ben-Ami and J. Dan (Jerusalem, 1983) (in Hebrew), pp. 272-273, who affirms that Menasseh did not mention theosophical issues, like *sephirot*, and is therefore not to be considered a kabbalist.

<sup>37</sup> The overt mention of R. Judah in *The Conciliator* was pointed out by Menahem Dorman in the introduction to his Hebrew translation of *Dialoghi d'Amore* (Jerusalem, 1983), p. 165 n. 96.

<sup>38</sup> *The Conciliator*, I, pp. 42-43.

<sup>39</sup> Compare *The Philosophy of Love*, pp. 289-290. On the kabbalistic implications of this passage of Abravanel, see Idel, "Kabbalah and Ancient Philosophy" (n. 10 above), pp. 89-93.

<sup>40</sup> Compare *The Philosophy of Love*, pp. 291-293.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 293-294.

dren of Israel to reckon seven weeks from the exit from Egypt which are forty-nine days . . . because the grand celestial year, according to astronomers, is one thousand years (and<sup>42</sup> the seven thousandth is the great millennium). And accordingly these seven years represent that chaos is in continental germination of generative things during the six thousand years, and would repose or cease in the seven thousandth, leaving all things in a state of original chaos (disorder or confusion), for this is what is called שמיטה, which means cessation of the inherent attraction of material things, and their reduction in the seven thousandth year to primitive chaos . . . the fiftieth year in which the whole inferior and celestial worlds shall be renewed and all things return to their original source or root, or in other words, that<sup>43</sup> the elements proceeding from First Matter shall return to it, and Spiritual Things and Intellectual Forms to Almighty God their Father and Giver; as the most learned sage, Rabbi Solomon ben Gabirol, says in his '*Keter Malkhut*'<sup>44</sup>: They go from the Holy Place, and by the Fountain of Light shall be regathered; or, that they shall be lucidly preserved in the sublime ideas of the Divine Understanding, and angels as well as souls shall be united with it, as the shadow<sup>45</sup> with the sun, until their new revolution. This, in conclusion, is the Kabbalistic opinion''.

The comparison between Menasseh's exposition of the kabbalistic views on the cosmic processes and his sources demonstrates that he used passages found in the writings of the Abravanel family. R. Isaac and Judah have both philosophically interpreted an existing kabbalistic view using neo-Platonical concepts. These interpretations were turned into kabbalah by Menasseh ben Israel. Moreover, the Abravanel family are mentioned, shortly after the aforementioned passage, in a highly interesting context<sup>46</sup>:

"Those who may be desirous to enter more deeply into the subject may consult the 'Mephalot Elohim' of Don Isaac Abravanel, 'Philography' by Don Judah Abravanel, 'Ma'asé a Shem' of R. Eliezer Ashkenazi, 'Adam Kadmon' of R. Isaac Loria<sup>47</sup>, R. Bechayai on the Tenth Chapter of Numbers, Nahmanides on the Twenty-Fifth Chapter of Leviticus, Magen David of R. David Zimra''.

<sup>42</sup> The statement in parentheses seems to be an addition of R. Menasseh.

<sup>43</sup> See *The Philosophy of Love*, p. 291.

<sup>44</sup> See *Keter Malkhut*, par. 25, in *The Liturgical Poetry of R. Solomon ibn Gabirol*, ed. D. Jarden (Jerusalem, 1971) (in Hebrew), vol. I, p. 53; the same verses were quoted by R. Isaac Abravanel, *ME*, VIII, 5, fol. 58b. The contexts of the quotation are similar in the two works.

<sup>45</sup> The motif of the shadow also occurs in *ME*, *ibid.*, vol. 58bc.

<sup>46</sup> *The Conciliator*, I, p. 45.

<sup>47</sup> We find here an explicit reference to a Lurianic issue – one fraught with theological significance – which must be added to the previous lists of Lurianic texts used by R. Menasseh: see n. 35 above. The work referred to is evidently *Derush Adam Kadmon v'ha-Azikut*, which was disseminated outside Palestine already at the end of the sixteenth century; see Alexander Altmann, "Notes on the Development of Rabbi Menahem Azariah Fano's Kabbalistic Doctrine", *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* (in Hebrew), vol. III (1983-1984) [*Studies in Jewish Mysticism Presented to Isaiah Tishby*], pp. 258 ff.

Here the Abravanel appears alongside a series of illustrious kabbalists; that they were considered kabbalists is evident from the very fact that Menasseh's exposition of the kabbalistic view is taken over, almost *verbatim*, from the Abravanel. In yet another passage we learn that:

"Following the opinions of the cabalistic theologians (in which Plato also agreed), that a first and sovereign effect, termed First Mind and First Intelligence, through which the beautiful universe was produced emanated from the Almighty one pure Unity, as R. Judah Abravanel rightly observed in his Philography . . ." <sup>48</sup>

The philosophical doctrine exposed here is indeed that of R. Judah <sup>49</sup>, as it is that which immediately follows this passage. Thus we can see again that R. Judah's obviously non-kabbalistic – but philosophical – view was perceived of, and presented by Menasseh as kabbalah. This seems to be the case also when a passage by R. Judah Abravanel, which was evidently influenced by a Muslim philosopher, Al-Batalyusi <sup>50</sup> is quoted <sup>51</sup> anonymously. At the end of this citation Menasseh concludes: "much has been written in a cabalistic sense on this subject". <sup>52</sup>

#### IV

We have so far discussed two differing perspectives on the relation between kabbalah and neo-Platonism in Menasseh's works; the latter is presented in *Nishmat Hayyim* as consonant with kabbalah since it continues previously existing Jewish ancient lore. In *The Conciliator* we find, beside this perception, also a presentation of views stemming mainly from the book by R. Judah Abravanel, as kabbalah. It seems that Menasseh regarded the affinity between the two bodies of thought to be so great that some neo-Platonic Jewish statements are viewed as authentic kabbalah (!). Here we witness an obvious broadening of the domain of kabbalah: while some theurgical and theosophical views, important in the main current of kabbalah as represented by the Zohar or Lurianic kabbalah are radically attenuated in Menasseh's works, he included cosmological discussions of neo-Platonic origin under the definition of kabbalah. He uses the works of the Abravanel, who helped him to formulate his views on *prisca theologia*,

<sup>48</sup> *The Conciliator*, I, p. 31. Compare also *ibid.*, I, p. 8, where this view of R. Judah is presented again.

<sup>49</sup> *Philosophy of Love*, pp. 335, 449-450.

<sup>50</sup> See M. Idel, "The Sources of the Circle Images in *Dialoghi d'Amore*" (in Hebrew), *Iyyun*, XXVIII (1978), pp. 156-160.

<sup>51</sup> *The Conciliator*, I, pp. 3-4.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, I, p. 4.

but he added to the kabbalistic views found in their works also their neo-Platonic interpretations, which are also included under the rubric of kabbalah. Menasseh was not interested in interpreting – or misinterpreting – kabbalah in a neo-Platonic manner; he simply copied such types of interpretation – already offered by his predecessors – *qua* kabbalah. This tendency is most obvious where R. Judah's work is concerned. What may be the reason for this "kabbalization" of an outstanding neo-Platonic work of the Renaissance period? It seems that a plausible explanation may be the prevalent attitude in Renaissance Christian thought which perceived neo-Platonic thought as especially close to kabbalah, a very peculiar case of this tendency being the inclusion of R. Judah Abravanel's *Dialoghi d'Amore* in Johanes Pistorius' volume of kabbalistic works *Ars Cabbalistica*. Though Menasseh ben Israel used the Spanish translation of Abravanel's work, its inclusion in a widespread kabbalistic work might have influenced his perception of it as a kabbalistic book.

A possible source of inspiration for Menasseh's kabbalization of neo-Platonism may be a passage by R. Joseph Delmedigo, an author who was well known by Menasseh. In his *Mazref le-Hokhmah* he wrote:

"It seems that the ancient philosophers spoke in a truer manner than Aristotle . . . especially Plato, the master of Aristotle, whose views are almost those of the sages of Israel, and in some issues it seems as if he has spoken using the mouth of Kabbalists, and their language, without any blemish on his lips. And why shall we not hold these views, since they are ours and they being inherited from our ancients, by the Greeks, and until now, some great sages hold the views of Plato, and there are great groups of students who follow him, as it is well known to anyone who served the sage of the Academy and entered their studies, which are found in every land"<sup>53</sup>.

Plato, and implicitly his later followers, are regarded as presenting versions of kabbalah which, consequently, may be used by Jewish theologians as valid kabbalistic stands. Let us adduce an attempt by Menasseh ben Israel to supply an explanation for a certain issue which is, according to him, missing in kabbalah<sup>54</sup>:

"Now to know the meaning of a certain letter being such a light, and what foundation is for the assumption, I have not found in any work; and although bold on my part, I shall, nevertheless, give my ideas, leaving myself open to correction, by those who are more learned in Cabala<sup>55</sup> than myself. Plato considered that the world . . . was not produced by chance, and therefore

<sup>53</sup> Ch. 25; R. Menasseh refers to this work in *NH*, I, 13, fol. 22a; III, 10, fol. 57c; III, 11, fol. 58a. See also Altmann, "Lurianic Kabbalah in a Platonic Key" (n. 12 above), p. 326.

<sup>54</sup> *The Conciliator*, I, pp. 108-109.

<sup>55</sup> For this reason R. Menasseh considers his discussion as connected to kabbalah.



says, it is positive it was formed by the Wise Understanding and Mind . . . So these plans of the universe which pre-existed in the divine mind, are termed by him *ideas*<sup>56</sup> . . . Now these ideas or plans in my opinion according to my weak judgement, are the letters (of the divine language or mode of speech). This is treated on in various ways: in the *Sefer Yeshirah* [!] . . . R. Joseph ben Carnebol<sup>57</sup>, explaining this in his *Sha'are Sedek* . . . Nachmanides . . . in the "Sepher Abitahon"<sup>58</sup> . . . R. Barahiel in his *Peraquim*"<sup>59</sup>.

The letters of the Hebrew alphabets are considered by Menasseh to be lights of *sephirot*<sup>60</sup>, and they may be conceived of as Platonic ideas; from Plato's theory of ideas the Jewish kabbalist can learn something which he "has not found in any work", *i.e.*, in any kabbalistic work. Again, the comparison between *sephirot* and *ideas* is not new. It is found, *inter alia*, in R. Isaac Abravanel's *Miphalot Elohim*<sup>61</sup>. Menasseh only elaborated upon the suggestion of his predecessors.

Menasseh ben Israel seems to be a rather passive and eclectic author, at least as far as our issue is concerned; he accepted an already existing line of argumentation regarding kabbalah and neo-Platonism, collecting the pertinent material but adding nothing of importance to the existing texts. His vast erudition was, apparently, an obstacle in the way of innovating the subject<sup>62</sup>. In comparison with R. Joseph Shelomo Delmedigo or R. Abraham Herrera, his older contemporaries and acquaintances, Menasseh's works do not contribute anything substantial to a new understanding of either kabbalah or neo-Platonism. Menasseh is the last ring in a long series of Jewish Renaissance authors who dealt with the problem of the relation between the two types of thought. These authors, some of them erudite kabbalists, represent an attempt to adapt kabbalah to the cultural trend which was dominant in their intellectual milieu – be it northern Italy or Amsterdam – by overemphasizing the affinities between it and neo-Platonism. This central and western European phenomenon is consonant with the major tendency prevalent in the Christian kabbalah,

<sup>56</sup> On this conception of ideas in Jewish Renaissance sources, see Idel, "The Magical and Neoplatonic Interpretations" (n. 9 above), pp. 226-227.

<sup>57</sup> *i.e.*, Gikatilla; this manner of referring to Gikatilla recurs in Reuchlin's works.

<sup>58</sup> On this work see Scholem, *Les origines de la Kabbale*, p. 340, n. 227.

<sup>59</sup> On this author and his work, see Idel, "Major Currents in Italian Kabbalah" (n. 15 above), pp. 248-249.

<sup>60</sup> See *The Conciliator*, I, p. 109, and compare the affinity between letters, which constitute the *Malbush*, and ideas in R. Abraham Herrera; cf. Altmann, "Lurianic Kabbalah in a Platonic Key" (n. 12 above), pp. 339-340.

<sup>61</sup> Fol. 58d; and see Idel, "Kabbalah and Ancient Philosophy" (n. 10 above), p. 98, n. 21.

<sup>62</sup> R. Isaac Aboab da Fonseca's *Nishmat Hayyim* also follows these lines of thought; there is no reference to alien beliefs in immortality of the soul or metempsychosis in this work: see Altmann, "Eternity of Punishment" (n. 17 above), pp. 55-58.

whereas the oriental kabbalists, since the last third of the sixteenth century, did their best to present a type of kabbalah free of external influences, which is mainly based upon an elaborate mythology. The oriental kabbalah, mostly in its Lurianic form, tended to see this lore as an esoteric mysticism which is uniquely the heritage of the Jews; it was cultivated in groups of mystics both in Safed and in northern Italy, who stress mostly the theurgical value of the commandments. Some of the European kabbalists viewed kabbalah as a corpus of theological ideas which can also be found elsewhere – among the gentiles, although they regarded their ultimate source to be the Mosaic tradition. The esoteric aspect of kabbalah was, therefore, considerably attenuated and this type of intellectual theosophy was the appanage of individuals who nevertheless were interested in exposing it to a larger public.

On the grounds of the preceding material, I would consider Menasseh ben Israel a representative of a certain trend of kabbalah which, notwithstanding its substantial differences from the oriental kabbalah, still represents unmistakable marks of previous Jewish kabbalistic thinking<sup>63</sup>.

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<sup>63</sup> Compare the view of Dan (n. 36 above), pp. 272-273, who denies the kabbalistic quality of R. Menasseh's *NH*, as this work did not conform to the definition he proposed to kabbalah; I prefer not to elaborate upon the problematics emerging from this definition. It is sufficient to remark that, according to such a definition, authors such as Abraham Abulafia, R. David ben Abraham ha-Lavan (see n. 7 above) or R. Isaac ibn Latif (n. 6 above), must be excluded from the domain of kabbalah. Nevertheless, Abulafia at least was still considered a very important kabbalist by R. Joseph Hamitz, a younger contemporary of R. Menasseh; see M. Idel, *R. Abraham Abulafia's Works and Doctrines* (in Hebrew) (Ph.D. thesis, Hebrew University, 1976), pp. 35-36. See also M. Idel, "Particularism and Universalism in kabbalah: 1480-1650", read at the Symposium on the sixteenth and seventeenth century at the Van Leer Institute, January 1986.

## HOW IMPORTANT WAS MENASSEH BEN ISRAEL?

ASA KASHER

More than anything else, the present paper is a plea for reconsidering some prevalent views of Menasseh ben Israel<sup>1</sup>.

Our original intention was to portray Menasseh ben Israel's importance in the eyes of orthodox writers, but our findings have led us to cast doubt on this alleged importance. Indeed, a gap between common expectations and negative results calls for a plausible explanation, which would either render the former unwarranted or explain away the latter. Such an explanation will be suggested in the sequel and a need will emerge for a whole reconsideration of Menasseh ben Israel's historical figure.

In order to depict Menasseh ben Israel's orthodox importance, one may pursue different lines of research. Since Menasseh ben Israel was active in a variety of spheres, one may look for traces of his influence in completely different areas. Within his own community, Menasseh ben Israel served as a rabbi and member of the rabbinical court. Some of his writings reflect a rabbinical bent of sorts. One, then, may wonder whether the attention Menasseh ben Israel has attracted within rabbinical circles is on a par with the reputation he has gained in other circles. The emerging answer is definitely negative and the puzzling is, indeed, why?

To get an impression of Menasseh ben Israel's rabbinical reputation, we used the facilities of the Responsa Project of the Institute for Information Retrieval and Computational Linguistics, at Bar-Ilan University<sup>2</sup>. A sample of 250 response books was used, including some 47,000 individual responsa. The sample includes all the major texts of this genre and many others, written all over the Jewish world<sup>3</sup>.

Within this representative sample, we have found only seven citations of Menasseh ben Israel, made by only five authors.

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Richard Popkin for constant encouragement and to Amos Funkenstein and Yosef Kaplan for helpful remarks.

<sup>2</sup> I thank the institute, and in particular Prof. Yaakov Choueka, for much assistance.

<sup>3</sup> The sample includes about 100 books which were written before Menasseh ben Israel's time. We included them in our work, because many of the texts have been annotated after Menasseh ben Israel's period and the texts of the editorial notes are at our disposal.

Outside the Responsa Project sample we have encountered additional Menasseh ben Israel citations, made by other authors, in works of different genres. The latter cases do not simply reinforce the general impression created by the former citations, one of scarcity and minority. The emerging picture will be more complicated than one of sheer unimportance.

We turn now to a brief presentation of the findings, first those of the Responsa Project sample and then the additional ones, from the weakest cases to the strongest ones.

The first citation is related to the French Tosafist Jacob of Marvège's *She'elot u Teshuvot min ha-Shamyim*. Of course, it is not the twelfth- or thirteenth-century text which mentions Menasseh ben Israel, but rather the modern annotator of those *Responsa from Heaven*, Rabbi Reuben Margalio<sup>4</sup>. With respect to the Talmudic saying that "All dreams follow the mouth" (Berakhot 56a), the editor of the responsa refers to Isaac Arama's *Akedat Yitzhak* as well as to Menasseh ben Israel's *Nishmat Hayyim* (*Nishmat Hayyim* III, 5).

However, what Menasseh ben Israel actually says in the last sentence of this chapter is that what the sages wrote, that all dreams follow the mouth "is not part of the intention of this book . . .". It is not clear what the editor's intention was in referring to Menasseh's dissociative remark.

The second case involves the eighteenth century renowned Yemenite rabbi and scholar, Mori Yihya Salih's responsa *Pe'ullat Tzaddik*<sup>5</sup>. The author discusses some mourning practices and having quoted an authority, saying that "prayer is mostly needed for the deceased during the first seven days, when the measure of justice strictly applies to him, as is well known", the author refers to two books, the second of which being *Nishmat Hayyim*.

Actually, the very same idea does not appear in Menasseh ben Israel's *Nishmat Hayyim*. When Menasseh discusses related topics (II, 27 and 29), the closest he comes to that idea is when he says that prayer raises the soul of the deceased from department to department. Related as those points are to each other, one would be reluctant to consider such a reference a real citation.

The third case is only slightly stronger. It involves a nineteenth-century rabbi from Iraq, Yosef Hayyim Ben Eliahu al-Hakham, whose responsa were entitled *Rav Pe'alim*<sup>6</sup>. The following remark is made in one of the

<sup>4</sup> Jerusalem, 1957, resp. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Jerusalem, 1946 and Tel-Aviv, 1955, resp. III, 188.

<sup>6</sup> Jerusalem, 1901-1913, resp. IV, 16.

responsa, in reply to a query as to the meaning of the words “Yahr Zeit”<sup>7</sup>, standing for the anniversary of death: “Notice that first I used to think that those letters are initials and I deciphered them, but then I saw what the Gaon Menasseh ben Israel wrote in his book *Nishmat Hayyim*, which is ancient of sorts, in ch. 27” of Part II.

Surprisingly enough, the author refers to Menasseh ben Israel, though the latter in turn refers to another authority who says that those words, “Yahr Zeit” mean, in the “language of Ashkenaz”, the anniversary of one’s father’s or mother’s death. Clearly, Menasseh ben Israel’s book is used only because it is readily available, at least more than a book published in Poland at about the same time. Still, the depiction of *Nishmat Hayyim* as “ancient of sorts” reflects a reverence of sorts.

Our fourth case is apparently stronger. The question was posed, during 1946, to Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef (later to become Rishon le-Zion and Israel Chief Rabbi), whether one is permitted to consume food that has been kept under a bed. The problem stems from a Talmudic related remark, that an “evil spirit resides” there. Maimonides, in his Code (*Mishneh Tora*, Hilkhot Avoda Zara, xi, 11 and 16), vehemently rejected seeming precepts, grounded on superstitious beliefs, but other authorities differed.

Rabbi Yosef refers to *Nishmat Hayyim* (III, 12) in his responsa “Yabbi’a Omer”<sup>8</sup>: in this chapter of *Nishmat Hayyim*, the existence of demons and spirits is proved “by kabbalah, reason and sense”.

However, when Rabbi Yosef concludes his response by mentioning adversary parties of authorities, he does not mention Menasseh ben Israel. Actually, his practical decree fits Maimonides’ view more than that of his opponents.

The last author, in the Responsa Project sample, to quote Menasseh ben Israel, is Rabbi Jair Hayyim Ben Rabbi Moses Samson Bacharach, the famous seventeenth-century author of the responsa *Havvot Yair*<sup>9</sup>. He was a scholar of sorts, showing interest in astronomy, mathematics and music, and this is, perhaps, what attracted him to Menasseh ben Israel. Bacharach quotes Menasseh thrice.

The first case<sup>10</sup> is during a discussion of astrology. Menasseh is mentioned as quoting Maimonides’ letter to the community of Marseilles. To be sure, Menasseh ben Israel opposes Maimonides’ total rejection of astrology and Bacharach uses this divergence of views to show that disputes are sometimes innocent.

<sup>7</sup> In the Hebrew texts, the word “Yahrzeit” has been divided into two: “Yahr” and “Zeit”.

<sup>8</sup> Jerusalem, 1956-1976, resp. I, 9.

<sup>9</sup> Lemberg, 1894.

<sup>10</sup> Resp. 1.

The second case<sup>11</sup> in which Bacharach quotes Menasseh ben Israel is also related to disputes: “The Greek chief philosopher wrote, love Socrates, love Plato, but love more the truth”. Bacharach quotes this saying from Menasseh ben Israel’s *Nishmat Hayyim* (II, 10)<sup>12</sup>, as well as from five other books.

The third discussion<sup>13</sup> during which Bacharach mentions Menasseh ben Israel is about spells. The problem is whether they should not be prohibited, being among the “ways of the Amorite”, *i.e.*, superstitious heathen practices. Bacharach concludes that what has been widely accepted by the women, one shouldn’t bother oneself with, because probably the women’s acceptance of it has been grounded in their experience. With respect to the affectability of spells, Bacharach refers to Menasseh ben Israel’s *Nishmat Hayyim* (III, 25).

What has been found in this sample of responsa is, indeed, not impressive: seven citations made by four authors and one annotator; three citations of what Menasseh ben Israel himself cites from others, two quite imprecise citations and two rather inconsequential ones, related to spells and demons. In all those cases, Menasseh ben Israel’s *Nishmat Hayyim* – the only work of Menasseh to be cited in the present sample – seems to serve as a reliable source of information, rather than of insight, argument or decree.

We turn now to three additional citations. The first one was made by the famous, eighteenth-century rabbi Hayyim Joseph David Azulai, in his itinerarium *Ma’agal Tov ha-Shalem*<sup>14</sup>. One Saturday, during November 1777 – Hayyim Joseph David Azulai tells us – he was approached by some members of the community of Brandon, with respect to theological issues. Hayyim Joseph David Azulai tells them that “Rabbi Aryeh Judah of Modena, Rabbi of Venice”<sup>15</sup> used not to believe in transmigration. One day, the rabbi from Venice saw a six-month old baby dying and heard him reciting the famous verse “Shema Israel”, Hear O’ Israel, etc. Since then he believed in transmigration. Hayyim Joseph David Azulai comments that Menasseh ben Israel<sup>16</sup>, “the chief of philosophers”, has already “proven it in the book *Nishmat Hayyim*”.

<sup>11</sup> Resp. 9.

<sup>12</sup> In the same paragraph, Menasseh ben Israel depicts Plato as a student of Jeremiah.

<sup>13</sup> Resp. 234.

<sup>14</sup> This citation is discussed by Prof. Gérard Nahon, in his contribution to the present workshop.

<sup>15</sup> Rabbi Judah Aryeh of Modena, known also as “Leone Modena”, was a teacher and preacher in Venice.

<sup>16</sup> The text refers to Menasseh ben Israel as “Moshe”. In the Responsa Project sample

This is, indeed, a very interesting comment. “Chief of philosophers” is no doubt an exaggeration, but even when this is granted, Hayyim Joseph David Azulai’s comment remains of much significance: Leone Modena should not have been skeptical with respect to transmigration until he encountered that baby; he rather should have relied on Menasseh ben Israel, who had proven it. Such a comment reflects more than mere respect. It shows that Hayyim Joseph David Azulai regarded Menasseh ben Israel as an authority on issues such as transmigration.

The other, additional citations are from a completely different source. They appear in a book entitled *Hayyei Olam*, written by Rabbi Jacob Kenayevsky, a highly reputable twentieth-century rabbinical authority. The book was published in Israel<sup>17</sup>, where the author resided before his recent death.

The book is neither technical nor philosophical in nature. It addresses theological problems in a simple way, meant to fit the youth.

In the introduction, the author explains why he avoids quoting theological books: it is impossible to discuss certain points without mentioning “false views of heretics and Epicureans”, or at least enabling the reader to figure out what they say. Accordingly, books that this ultra-orthodox rabbi saw fit to quote, were in his eyes even educationally impeccable.

One of those books is Menasseh ben Israel’s *Nishmat Hayyim*. It is mentioned in the very first sentence of the chapter on the eternity of the soul<sup>18</sup> as the major text on the subject.

The second citation is of lesser significance. The issue is, again, transmigration. The author quotes a number of transmigration stories told by various authorities, the first on the list being one related by Menasseh in *Nishmat Hayyim* (III, 10)<sup>19</sup>.

The ten citations that we have encountered do not lend themselves to a clear portrayal of Menasseh ben Israel’s rabbinical stature.

Indeed, it is tempting to discard the whole list, for one reason or other, and go on accepting the common views of Menasseh ben Israel’s high importance. Let us, then, briefly consider such apparent reasons for discarding the whole list of citations.

(1) “The sample is not representative”. We don’t have any reason to doubt the Responsa Project sample being representative of rabbinical discussions. It includes a significant part of the whole responsa literature and definitely all the major texts of the genre.

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we have, however, encountered no other reference to Menasseh ben Israel under “Moshe ben Israel”.

<sup>17</sup> Benei-Berak, 1972<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> Part I, ch. 7.

<sup>19</sup> Part I, ch. 12.

This body of responsa is extremely variegated in subject. Hence, since Menasseh ben Israel's writings included discussions of quite a variety of topics, one would have expected more citations and much more significant ones, assuming that Menasseh ben Israel was rabbinically influential.

(2) "Perhaps the sample is historically biased". Again, there is no reason to assume that the sample is thus biased. A case in point is that of a citation we have found in that sample to what Isaac Aboab da Fonseca instructed to be done when the great Synagogue of the community was inaugurated<sup>20</sup>. Isaac Aboab served as a *haham* in the same Amsterdam community, at about the same period.

(3) "Responsa do not mention philosophical treatises. Since Menasseh ben Israel is most well known within rabbinical circles for his *Nishmat Hayyim*, it is expected that he will be under-represented in the sample". To find out whether this seemingly plausible reason is correct, we checked the sample for references to philosophers and their books. Since one may assume that for obvious reasons Maimonides and his writings will be favored by various authors, we looked for responsa mentioning Judah Halevi or his *Sefer ha-Kuzari* and for responsa mentioning Joseph Albo or his *Sefer ha-Ikkarim*. Both are not related to responsa in general more than Menasseh ben Israel or his *Nishmat Hayyim*.

Here are the results: There are forty references to Judah Halevi and sixty six to *ha-Kuzari*. Those two forms of reference should not be kept strictly apart, because on several occasions the second form is used for referring to the author or the first one is related to the book. The citations were made by twenty seven different authors. Albo is mentioned in the same sample six times and his book forty. These citations were made by sixteen authors.

The terms "philosophy", "philosophers" and their inflected forms appear there 270 times, in responsa written by forty six different authorities.

One would, then, not be justified in assuming that Menasseh ben Israel or *Nishmat Hayyim* are mentioned in the sample only seven times, by only four authors and an editor, because of the philosophical nature of *Nishmat Hayyim*.

(4) "Menasseh ben Israel was too enlightened to play a role in rabbinical literature". However, one should note, first, that it is not self-evident that rabbinical writers since the middle of the seventeenth century were aware of Menasseh ben Israel's other works, his correspondence and other contacts with Christian scholars or of his political activities.

<sup>20</sup> This is cited in Rabbi Eliezer Judah Waldenberg's *Tzitz Eliezer*, vol. XIV (Jerusalem, 1981), resp. 67, which in turns cites Hayyim Joseph David Azulai's *Mahazik Berakhah*.



Secondly, Maimonides, Rabbi Elijah “the Vilna Gaon”, as well as many others, were held by rabbinical authorities to be fluent in various sciences, without a shadow being cast thereby on their reputation or authority.

It is, perhaps, interesting to compare Menasseh ben Israel to Moses Mendelssohn, in that respect. The latter has eventually been depicted by many rabbinical writers as the emblem of the Enlightenment movement, notorious for its anti-orthodox stances. Moses Mendelssohn is mentioned in our sample just once, being referred to as “Moses of Dessau”. What is cited is the German translation of the Bible that he edited. The citation itself was made by Rabbi David Zevi Hoffmann, a nineteenth-century famous German rabbi, himself somewhat of a controversial character, mainly because of his Talmudic criticism<sup>21</sup>. Mendelssohn’s case is obviously not on a par with that of Menasseh ben Israel.

(5) “Could it be argued that some rabbinical authorities were reluctant to mention Menasseh ben Israel, because some of his associates turned later to be adherents of Sabbatai Şevi?” One should answer this question in the negative. One of the Jews accompanying Menasseh ben Israel during his visit to England was Raphael Supino, later a follower of Sabbatai Şevi, but in England with Menasseh ben Israel was also Jacob Sasportas, who is famous for fighting against Sabbatai Şevi’s followers in Amsterdam. Menasseh ben Israel’s reputation could not have suffered, for what some of his acquaintances committed themselves to years after he had died.

Not being able to discard the data, one has to reconsider the conflicting theory.

Some may be inclined to explain the data of the sample by deeming Menasseh ben Israel rabbinically unimportant, being the Jew of the Christian world of scholarship, not a hero of the Jews, neither an authority nor a savior.

However, the additional citations that we presented, from outside the Responsa Project sample, introduce a major qualification. Menasseh ben Israel seems to be held in high reputation, but his writings except for *Nishmat Hayyim* are virtually unknown, and *Nishmat Hayyim* itself is used mainly as a highly reliable source of folk-theological information, rather than as a body of considered judgments. Moreover, his reputation is related mainly to issues that rationalistic philosophers would dissociate themselves from – demons, ghosts, transmigration and the like. Menasseh ben Israel seems to serve in the responsa we discussed, as well as in

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<sup>21</sup> *Mahmad Leho’il*, vol. III, resp. 33.

the additional citations we mentioned, as an absolutely reliable carrier of data on marginal, folk-theological issues.

If we are still in a puzzle of sorts, as a result of having encountered those citations and been led to those, so to speak, somewhat dismounting conclusions, it is because a confirmation of our resulting view requires more than the data at hand. It requires a reconsideration of the quality of all of Menasseh ben Israel's work. Our puzzle will be resolved in the suggested direction, if all of Menasseh ben Israel's works bear the marks of a highly knowledgeable carrier of variegated information, rather than those of an original thinker.

## THE MESSIANIC POLITICS OF MENASSEH BEN ISRAEL

HAROLD FISCH

### I

Menasseh's most considerable Hebrew treatise, his *Nishmat Hayyim* (1651) on the subject of the immortality of the soul, shows him to be, according to Cecil Roth, essentially credulous and naïf:

"The staid Jewish scholar was revealed as crassly superstitious, believing implicitly in spirits and ghosts, in possession by, and the expulsion of, demons, not to mention the transmigration of souls and similar doctrines"<sup>1</sup>.

Other scholars have echoed this view of Menasseh's naivety and credulity. Now it is true that in this treatise Menasseh accepted a lot of tall stories, true also that he sought to controvert Maimonides who offered a rational interpretation of supernatural appearances and events in the Bible<sup>2</sup>. Menasseh wanted real miracles, real demons and real angels. But all this has to be kept in proportion: after all, Maimonides' philosophical rationalizations were by no means part of a theological consensus at this time. One didn't need to be "crassly superstitious" to reject them. The wildest (as well as the most dramatic) stories in Menasseh's book relate examples of "gilgul" or the transmigration of souls – what later would come to be called stories of the "dybbuk". One of these "gilgul" episodes took place in Safed in 1571 in the presence of R. Selomoh Alkabetz; another account mentions R. Isaac Luria and R. Hayyim Vital as involved with the process of exorcism<sup>3</sup>. Whilst such notions are today no longer part of Jewish belief, we are to bear in mind that stories of possession and exorcism were a by-product of sixteenth and seventeenth century kabbalism, that associated with Isaac Luria<sup>4</sup>. As such they belonged to what might be termed "normal mysticism". As Scholem has argued, Lurianic Kabbalah had come to be almost standard Jewish theology at this time, and the doctrines of

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<sup>1</sup> Cecil Roth, *A Life of Menasseh Ben Israel* (Philadelphia, 1945), p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> *Sefer Nishmat Hayyim*, Part III, section 28 (edition of Leipzig, 1862), p. 88 a.b.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 10 and IV, 20 (pp. 68-69, 103b-104). For comment on the historical and literary background, see G. Nigal, *Sippurey Dibbuk Be-Sifrut Yisrael* (Jerusalem, 1983), pp. 11-26, 47, 61 f.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York, 1946), pp. 280 f.

“gilgul” and “tikkun” were an integral part of it<sup>5</sup>. There was nothing eccentric about Menasseh going along with this. He also argues that on the separate existence of the soul he has Plato on his side and indeed all the ancients except Pliny<sup>6</sup>. But his immediate intellectual context is the Renaissance magic associated with Giordano Bruno and, on the Jewish side, with Luria and his disciples.

But the question is, should a direct line be drawn between these aspects of Menasseh’s beliefs and his messianic politics, in particular his project for the resettlement of the Jews in England? Frances Yates in her brief discussion of Menasseh’s career proposes such a direct link between his Lurianic kabbalism and his mission to Cromwell with the messianic speculations that accompanied it<sup>7</sup>. It seems to me that a study of *Nishmat Hayyim* and a closer look at the true nature of Menasseh’s messianic project do not bear out this conclusion. In one place, arguing for the magical results to be obtained by the use of amulets and spells and by the manipulation of divine Names, he mentions the use of such “practical kabbalah” or “natural magic” by David Alroy in twelfth-century Persia<sup>8</sup>. Drawing his information evidently from Selomoh Ibn Verga’s *Sefer Shevet Yehudah*, he tells us how Alroy had declared himself to be the Messiah, leading many thousands of Jews astray with the promise of restoring the Jewish Kingdom in the Holy Land, how he had been imprisoned by the King of Persia for sedition and how, in escaping, he had performed wonders such as making himself invisible, all with the help of the Divine Names, and how eventually he had been killed<sup>9</sup>. Whilst this certainly suggests a measure of credulity on the part of Menasseh (though no greater than that of the fifteenth-century chronicler Ibn Verga himself) it is important to note that Menasseh classes Alroy with those who sought to “seduce and unsettle” the Jewish people of his time. He was, in short, in spite of his use of “practical kabbalah”, a false Messiah. Whilst not adopting a sceptical position on natural magic, Menasseh is nevertheless here making it clear that its exercise is not an indubitable blessing, nor can it serve to validate messianic claims.

In the continuation of the same section (III, 28) in which he speaks of David Alroy’s manipulation of the divine name and the wonders that he

<sup>5</sup> G. Scholem, *Sabbatai Ševi: The Mystical Messiah* (Princeton, 1973), pp. 25, 42; *idem*, s.v. “Gilgul”, *Encyc. Judaica*, V, c. 576.

<sup>6</sup> *Nishmat Hayyim*, IV, 5 (p. 95).

<sup>7</sup> Frances A. Yates, *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age* (London, 1979), p. 184.

<sup>8</sup> *Nishmat Hayyim*, III, 28 (p. 89, a). Menasseh mistakenly refers to him as David Almusah but there can be little doubt that Alroy is the false Messiah intended. The terms “natural magic” and “practical kabbalah” occur in Menasseh’s discussion.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Selomoh Ibn Verga, *Sefer Shevet Yehuda*, ed. Y. Baer and A. Shohat (Jerusalem, 1946), pp. 74-75. (In Ibn Verga the name is likewise corrupted and appears as David Aldavid.)

performed with its help – Menasseh draws a clear distinction between “practical kabbalah” on the one hand and mainline prophetic Judaism on the other. In the passage to which I wish to draw attention he takes issues with two contemporary (non-Jewish) critics who had questioned the efficacy of the magical use of the divine names. Their challenge and his reply are revealing:

“They say, ‘If you blind and wretched Jews can perform marvels by means of the Divine Names, and if wisdom dies with you, why do you remain scattered and dispersed, exposed to insult and infamy? Why do you not make mention of the Name of the living God that He may raise you to glory, that your enemies may be cut off and you may tread underfoot all the nations dwelling on earth?’ But this is a meaningless question, for Scripture has already declared (Proverbs 21:30) that ‘there is no wisdom or understanding or counsel against the Lord’, or (against) his counsel which he has taken, and who can compel his will? And you have already heard in the foregoing how God can change the nature of the heavenly powers and principalities so that they cannot be conjured [by magical means]. And this is a decisive answer”<sup>10</sup>.

Clearly in spite of his credulity, he is setting limits here for the exercise of magic and occult techniques. I am not suggesting that he is in this a systematic theologian; he was more of an eclectic. In regard to “gilgul” and the like he argues, as I have noted, against Maimonides; but where the prophetic and providential drift of Jewish history is concerned, he sees no role for magical techniques and conjurations. In this connection he approvingly quotes Maimonides who had laid it down that signs and wonders do not confirm the prophecy of Moses and other prophets. Our belief in them is not based on the miracles they perform<sup>11</sup>, for their mission is not in essence a matter of occult experiences or evidences.

*Nishmat Hayyim* was written many years before the drama of Sabbatai ʿSevi and his messianic claims became the central issue for European Jewry. Indeed Menasseh had been dead for eight years when the Sabbatean fever reached Amsterdam. But it is worth speculating on his possible reaction. Would he have been swept away by the enthusiasm or would he have seen him as another Alroy? Judging by the distinction he makes in the passages of *Nishmat Hayyim* referred to or cited above, Menasseh would probably have retained his balance like his friend Rabbi Jacob Sasportas. Sasportas, had incidentally worked as a proofreader in Menasseh’s printing-shop in Amsterdam and had appended a commendatory epistle to the first edition of Menasseh’s treatise. It will be remembered that later in the century

<sup>10</sup> *Nishmat Hayyim*, III, 28 (p. 89b).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 30 (p. 90b). Cf. Maimonides, *Code*, *Hilkhot Yesodey ha-Torah*, Chapter 8.

Sasportas was to become a leading anti-Sabbatean critic and sceptic<sup>12</sup>. On the other hand, another associate of Menasseh in London, the Italian Jew Raphael Supino was to become a fervent believer in Sabbatai Şevi maintaining his belief in him even after his apostasy<sup>13</sup>.

## II

Rather than speculate on how Menasseh might have reacted to the false messianism of Sabbatai Şevi had he lived long enough to encounter it, it would be better to examine the actual messianic claims which Menasseh himself made in connection with his mission to England and to try to establish a typology appropriate to that project. In what ways does it resemble the typology which may be derived from the claims of Sabbatai Şevi, and in what ways does it differ? The first thing that needs to be said is that Menasseh's project was indeed messianic. In his "Declaration to the Commonwealth of England" (1655) he bases his appeal for the readmission of the Jews to England on their all-but-total dispersion in all parts of the world "except only in this considerable and mighty island" and he adds:

"And therefore this remains only in my judgement, before the MESSIA come and restore our Nation, that first we must have our seat her likewise"<sup>14</sup>.

This argument is not a ploy for public relations purposes; it surely belongs to the core of his beliefs. He saw the return of the Jewish People to England as the necessary prelude to their return to Zion in fulfillment of the prophecies. Ultimately one prays for the time when "the Lord our God . . . may be pleased to remember his Mercies and Promises, . . . restoring us once again into our fathers Inheritance"<sup>15</sup>. History for Menasseh thus bears witness to a messianic purpose, and, what is more, *human beings* can help that purposes along: Menasseh was helping it along, consciously, by his visit to Cromwell. One does not just wait for the Messiah to come, one takes practical steps. It may be argued that this is not unlike Sabbatai Şevi's program – he believed, in the Lurianic spirit, that the return to Zion could be brought about with the help of the practical kabbalah, the adepts exerting themselves to retrieve the sparks of divinity which had fallen into the "klippah". In addition, Menasseh, like Sabbatai, had a strong sense of his being individually ordained, chosen to bring about

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Scholem, *Sabbatai Şevi*, pp. 581-583.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 760. Yitzhak F. Baer, *Galui* (New York, 1947), p. 98, chooses to stress this association.

<sup>14</sup> L. Wolf, *Menasseh Ben Israel's Mission to Oliver Cromwell* (London, 1901), p. 79.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.

these messianic results. It was more than a whimsy that made him proud of the fact that through his wife's family his children were in the direct line of descent from King David! In the seventh section of the *Vindiciae Judaeorum* (1656) – likewise aimed at the English reader as part of his mission to the Commonwealth – he quotes the prophecy of Daniel to the effect that “when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished” (Daniel 12:7), the accomplishment coming of course with the completing of the dispersion to England. He then adds a personal observation:

“And I knew not, but that the Lord who often works by naturall means, might have design'd, and made choice of me, for the bringing about this work”<sup>16</sup>.

Finally, the two messianic projects, that of Sabbatai Şevi and that of Menasseh Ben Israel have a similar historical background. They are responses to the same situation. For the tens of thousands who rallied to the call of Sabbatai Şevi later in the century, their messianic fervour was fuelled by the sense of an unprecedented crisis of Jewish suffering in Poland and elsewhere. For Menasseh, the declared and explicit background of his mission to Cromwell was the homelessness and distress caused to Jews in the aftermath of the expulsion from Spain and the actions of the Inquisition against the “New Christians”.

All this may suggest a similar messianic typology. I will, however, suggest that fundamentally what we have is a typology not only different from that which might be gathered from the story of the false messiah of Smyrna, but in many respects its precise opposite. Essentially, Sabbatai's enthusiasm was internal, self-inspired. Leaving aside the issue of his mental derangement, we can say that his was a messianism of the inner life, nourished by the evidence of the spirit within. It was in the deepest sense a phenomenon of the occult. In this he was like many of the Christian millenarians of the time whose calculations were based on the reading of enigmatic verses rather than on attention to what was afoot in the world around them. Dates for the millennium were fixed on the basis of inner evidences and occult techniques and events in the political order were expected to conform to them; when the millennium failed to arrive another date was fixed by the same process. Sabbatai's plan to overthrow the Sultan of Turkey and bring about a revolution in Constantinople in 1666 was in the exactest sense of the word “fantastic” – it had no connection with political realities. For himself and for Nathan his prophet, when history and vision failed to coincide, then history had to be adapted to vision. Thus victories are achieved not in the outer realm where men and

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 143-144.

armies clash but in the inner realm where the Messiah struggles to rescue the fallen “sparks” from their defilement and thus redeem the world. This is a genuinely occult and mystical reading of events. We have here in short a monologue, the soul struggling for messianic assurances to be achieved within the circle of consciousness itself.

Menasseh’s case – and I would add, that of normal Jewish messianism – is different. He reads texts for sure, but his attention is directed to events, to historical opportunities which are to be seized to advance his messianic program. It is not a monologue but a dialogue – a dialogue with history. There is a sensitivity to history and its processes that we do not find in Sabbatai Ševi and his followers. It is expressed in his circular letter to the oppressed Jews of Europe which Menasseh sent off prior to his departure for London in 1655. In it he speaks of the religious and political changes in England and of their significance for the Jewish people<sup>17</sup>. He had his ear close to the ground, and as is well-known carried out an extensive correspondence with leaders of many kinds of opinion from the sober Arminians, a rational “physico-theologian” such as Robert Boyle, to such enthusiastic millenarians as Nathaniel Homes and Henry Jessey<sup>18</sup>. From this correspondence he caught not only the millenarian longings of his time but also a new sympathy for the Jews as the still unrejected people of God. There were signs to be read in the world around him, history was on the move. From this point of view, Menasseh’s plan to secure the admission of the Jews to England was messianic politics of the first order.

In this connection we may consider briefly the issue of the Ten Tribes which provided the starting-point for Menasseh’s mission. The story begins as is well known with the testimony of Antonio de Montezinos who arrived in Amsterdam from South America in September 1644 reporting that he had met descendants of the Ten Tribes in the region of what is now Ecuador and that they were able to recite the Shema! What is interesting about all this for our present concern is that Menasseh sat on the story for over five years, only publishing the report in *The Hope of Israel* in 1650 when he judged that it could become a weighty factor in the movement for re-admitting the Jews to England. Whether he believed Montezinos’ story or not is ultimately irrelevant<sup>19</sup>. The point is that his reaction to it was in a

<sup>17</sup> First published by Cecil Roth, “New Light on the Resettlement”, *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society in England*, XI (1928), pp. 112-142. See also, David S. Katz, *Philosemitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England* (Oxford, 1982), p. 198.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. David S. Katz, *Philosemitism*, pp. 103-106.

<sup>19</sup> Richard H. Popkin, “The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Indian Theory” (elsewhere in this volume) shows how cautious and reserved Menasseh was in his correspondence with John Dury on the question of the Lost Tribes in America.



profound sense “political” – a judgement of it which included a judgement of its effect on people’s minds. The story became important for his messianic project when it aroused the enthusiasm of four or five major non-Jewish figures. As A.J. Saraiva has recently argued<sup>20</sup>, Antonio de Vieira, a Jesuit and millenarian preacher, must have picked up news of the report on his second visit to Amsterdam in 1648 if not earlier. It is known that he and Menasseh met and, though there is no actual record of their conversation, Saraiva plausibly reconstructs it from Vieira’s letters and the account he gave to the Inquisition later on. Vieira was evidently excited by the news of the discovery of the Ten Tribes which he took as an event heralding the millennium. This he understood in Joachimite terms as a terrestrial kingdom; in it Jews and Christians would be united in faith and brotherhood under the rule of Christ and the King of Portugal! Menasseh responded warmly to Vieira’s version of a consummation of history in which a restored people of Israel would have a central role. He could accept this whilst diplomatically reserving his judgement on the question of the *parousia*, i.e., the specifically Christian element in Vieira’s scheme. But more than that, such a conversation must have started Menasseh thinking how best these enthusiasms could be channelled to serve his own messianic agenda. A similar pattern emerges from his reaction to Isaac La Peyrère’s *Du Rappel des Juifs* and Paul Felgenhauer’s *Bonum Nuncium Israeli* with their conversionist message.

But his real opportunity came when the story of the discovery of the Ten Tribes struck fire in the minds of the Englishmen John Dury and his friend Thomas Thorowgood. In fact Montezinos’ report first saw the light of day as an appendix to Thorowgood’s book *Jews in America* (1650)<sup>21</sup>. True he had the information from Menasseh, but Menasseh himself only published the report on the Ten Tribes in *The Hope of Israel* some months later. By late 1650, it was clear that the story was having a significant impact. Thomas Fuller in *A Pisgah-Sight of Palestine* (1650) – a major work which was still being reprinted down to relatively modern times – hoped for further confirmation of this amazing news, in the meantime suspending his judgement. What is more, in the section immediately following he is led to speculate on the possibility of the return of the Jews to Zion, remarking that “it is a conceit of the modern Jews that one day they shall return under the conduct of their Messias to the country of Canaan and city of Jerusalem, and be reinstated in the full possession thereof”<sup>22</sup>. Menasseh may or may not

<sup>20</sup> A.J. Saraiva, “Antonio Vieira, M. Ben Israel et le Cinquième Empire”, *Studia Rosenthaliana*, VI (1972), pp. 25-56.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Roth, *Life*, pp. 182-183.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Fuller, *A Pisgah-Sight of Palestine*, Book V, Chapter ii, section 3 (London, 1869), p. 628.

have determined that the discovery of the Ten Tribes in America had messianic significance, but what was clear to him by 1650 was that the interest generated by the discovery especially in England – *that* was of messianic significance. There was, in other words, a genuine historical intuition, a response to changes in the climate of the times. Menasseh had read the signs correctly, not the signs that Montezinos had recorded in South America, but the signs produced by the reading of Montezinos in England. This is not so much millenarianism as what may be termed meta-millenarianism. He sensed that Puritan England with its new energies, its liberation from traditional political and theological inhibitions, might have a role to play in furthering the ends of Jewish polity.

Richard Popkin is surely right in saying that Menasseh “was not uncomfortable operating in a Jewish-Christian world” of millenarian speculation and activity. His exchange of views with men like Dury, Thoroughgood and Vieira was intense and continuous. But I would want to question his conclusion that there was an almost total harmony between his Jewish messianism and the Christian millenarianism of his time, making them practically the same thing<sup>23</sup>. I am arguing that they are essentially different. Christian millenarianism is more like Sabbateanism, a system of inner convictions and evidences to which history is required to bend; Menasseh’s messianism is something else – a watchfulness and a readiness to seize opportunities as soon as they seem to point in the right direction. He might have said with Hamlet “the readiness is all”. There is a two-way traffic here between what is happening in the world and the evidence derived from sacred texts; the one bears witness to the other. Certainly Menasseh was interested in the spiritual ferment in England during the hectic years of the Commonwealth and kept a very close watch on it, but his project was not intrinsically identifiable with those of the Puritan sectaries. It was simply a time of intellectual and spiritual movement. During that time all kinds of utopian reforms had become possible. There were for instance the utopian reforms in education associated with Comenius and his friends. Similarly, the first scientific meetings of the so-called “Invisible College” took place during the Puritan era<sup>24</sup>. But all this does not mean that the early scientists or educators were all Puritans; it means that the atmosphere created by the Revolution and its aftermath was conducive to utopian projects of all kinds, including the scientific project later to be

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<sup>23</sup> Richard H. Popkin, “Jewish Messianism and Christian Millenarianism” in P. Zagorin, ed., *Culture and Politics from Puritanism to the Enlightenment* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1980), pp. 75, 77 (“His messianism turned out to be one step away from the Christian millenarian position”).

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1979), pp. 321-331.

formalized with the establishment of the Royal Society. Menasseh's project falls into this same category: during the period of the Commonwealth such a revolutionary notion as the return of the Jews to England could be actively pursued. It is not necessary to harmonize his theological position with that of the Fifth Monarchists or the Baptists or the Independents. He was really no more a Fifth Monarchist than he was an Arminian – in fact in such a tract as *Of the Term of Life* he showed himself near the Pelagian position on the question of free-will. The truth is that his Jewish heritage was catholic enough to enable him to sympathize with and at the same time stand back from, all these options. Above all he was attentive to change, awaiting his moment to act.

If Menasseh chose to act in 1655, it was not because he had calculated the end of days by *gematria* or by interpreting the chronologies in the more enigmatic verses of Daniel. He simply waited and listened, holding himself in readiness for signs of change in the England of his time. By 1655 these signs were clear to him – and he was right. This it would seem is the true posture of Jewish messianism as defined by Maimonides in his twelfth principle: "I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah, and though he tarry, I will wait daily for his coming". Not the eschaton, but the daily waiting is what counts, the messianic tension of history itself. This is caught beautifully in the story told in the Talmud of the encounter between Rabbi Joshua Ben Levi and the Messiah:

"R. Joshua B. Levi met Eijah . . . he asked him, 'when will the Messiah come'. Elijah replied, 'Go, and ask him'. 'But where is he?' 'At the gate of Rome'. 'And what is his mark?' 'He sits among the wretched who are sorely afflicted; all the others uncover all their wounds, and then bind them all up again, but he uncovers and binds each one separately, for he thinks, Lest I should be summoned and be detained'. Then R. Joshua went [to the Messiah] and said to him, 'Peace be with thee, Master and Rabbi'. He replied 'Peace be with thee, son of Levi'. He said, 'When is the Master coming?' He replied, 'To-day'. Then R. Joshua returned to Elijah, who said, 'What did he say to you?' He replied, 'Peace be with thee, son of Levi . . . he spoke falsely to me, for he said he would come to-day, and he has not come'. Then Elijah said, 'He meant: To-day, if ye hearken to my voice.'" (Psalm 95:7)<sup>25</sup>.

The first thing to note is the aspect of "Waiting for Godot". Waiting and watchfulness are of the essence, the messianic tension – both the waiting of the Messiah himself who never relaxes but remains spurred for his journey at every moment and the waiting and hearkening of the believer who must constantly listen out for the messianic signs which each day is likely to bring. The second thing to note is that the Messiah situates

<sup>25</sup> B.T. *Sanhedrin*, 98a.

himself at the cross-roads, at the gateway to Rome, amid the sick and the suffering. He has a sense of a world-situation, a world-crisis which at any moment might point him forward on his path. He is ready and attentive and he expects the same readiness from us.

### III

Menasseh's real goal was Zion, its redemption and the ingathering of its exiles. This is what he says clearly in his *Humble Adresses* to Cromwell and the leaders of the Commonwealth; basically, that is what he meant ultimately by "the Hope of Israel". But he knew that the path was long and he had the historical intuition to recognize that it led through England. This intuition combined with a canny sense of the commercial and political benefits that might accrue both to England and the Jews from the readmission; in particular there would be enhanced prospects for European Jewry arising out of a connection with the new rising bourgeoisie of England open as never before to the notion of religious liberty. These messianic politics of Menasseh combined the practical and the romantic. His romanticism was like that of Disraeli in a later century. Disraeli was another Zionist dreamer who had a notion of England's role in the messianic scheme of things which he develops in his novel *Tancred* (1847)<sup>26</sup>. But he too, like Menasseh, combined romantic notions with practical politics – the practical streak that led him to secure the Suez Canal for Britain to help her along with the messianic mission of the British Empire. It was to the practical streak in Menasseh that Cromwell evidently responded. He had plenty of sectaries and millenarians around him and he knew how to send them about their business when they became too wildly unrealistic. What drew him to Menasseh was the latter's sense of practical contingencies. When the issue of the Ten Tribes looked like good politics around 1650, and not before, Menasseh pressed it for all he was worth; when it became something of an embarrassment after about 1653, he quietly dropped it. He did not return to the argument in the seventh section of the *Vindiciae Judaearum* (1656) where he sums up his earlier work on the question of the readmission of the Jews to England.

Menasseh was thus not an enchanted mystic or millenarian, nor did he actually dabble in the occult. His messianism was not that of the false messiahs David Alroy and Sabbatai Sevi; he was a dreamer but he had his feet on the ground. If anything, we should link him to the fathers of

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<sup>26</sup> For comment see, by the present author, "Disraeli's Hebraic Compulsions", in *Essays Presented to Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. H.J. Zimmels, J. Rabbinowitz, I. Finestein (London, 1967), pp. 81-94.

modern Zionism in the nineteenth century. They exhibit the same messianic typology as Menasseh. Moses Hess (*Rome and Jerusalem*, 1862) situates himself, literally, at the gates of Rome! If Rome could gain her independence in these latter days, why not Israel, he argues. His intuition was sound. Like Menasseh he responded to the revolutionary movements of his time. Marxist revolutionary theory was the nineteenth-century equivalent of Christian millenarianism in the seventeenth century – Hess used it but with reservations<sup>27</sup>. Herzl later read the signs of his time – now was a time to speak of Jewish nationhood for the rights of small nations were now a marketable commodity. He responded too, like Menasseh, to the anguish of the Jewish condition. This is the dialogue with history which is the mark of normal Jewish messianism. Like Menasseh, Herzl gained the ear of monarchs and rulers, fascinating them with his tenacity, his enthusiasm, the grandeur of his conception. Like Menasseh he too aimed at a charter, an official endorsement of Jewish aims by the Sultan of Turkey. But this was not to be and by the time he died, like Menasseh, a disappointed man, it seemed that his grander political objectives were not achievable. Curiously enough both of these visionaries were wrong in this; their real achievements became clear after their deaths. Herzl's charter came not in the form which he had conceived and not from the quarter that he expected but in the form of a declaration by the British government in 1917. Menasseh's charter was to come likewise not from Cromwell but in the form of a somewhat unobtrusive letter from Charles II in 1664 assuring the Jewish residents of London that they might continue to reside there unmolested<sup>28</sup>. The grand gesture that Menasseh had hoped for was not forthcoming and perhaps that was just as well – it might have prejudiced the Jewish case with Charles if Cromwell had made such a gesture. The future belonged with the school of those who believed in "yet another dunam". The story of the resettlement following the failure of Menasseh's mission is a story of unremarkable little steps, like the leasing of a house for a synagogue or the purchase of a piece of land outside the City of London for a burial-ground. As in the case of post-Herzlian Zionist history, these seemingly insignificant "facts on the ground" turned out to be the decisive evidence of success. The grand gestures would come later. Patient waiting is what was needed.

There is not only a structural link between these examples of messianism: there is also a diachronic link. In a deep sense Menasseh prepared the way for the Zionists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Isaiah Berlin, *The Life and Opinions of Moses Hess* (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 12-16, 24; 46, also H. Fisch, *The Zionist Revolution: A New Perspective* (London, 1978), pp. 45-47.

<sup>28</sup> Roth, *Life*, p. 279; Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, p. 243.

sensed that the path of Jewish history passed through England and the English. If he had a special part in bringing about the Restoration of the Jews to England, then England and England's Jews had a special part in preparing the way for the Jewish State<sup>29</sup>. The ghost of Menasseh was undoubtedly present at the meeting of the Maccabeans in London in 1896 when Herzl unveiled his project for a Jewish State to the Jews of London and he also sat at the elbow of "Dear Lord Rothschild" when, as the representative of Anglo-Jewry, he became the recipient of the Balfour Declaration in 1917. Lord Balfour, Lord Robert Cecil and Lloyd George were just the sort of latter-day Christians with whom Menasseh would have enjoyed corresponding. At all events, to imagine him playing his part in this later act of the drama of restoration, would make a good story of "gilgul" or transmigration of souls to add to the vivid and colorful "gilgul"-stories which he relates in his treatise *Nishmat Hayyim*. And perhaps we need a little of that sort of credulity and historical imagination to do full justice to his achievement.

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. Franz Kobler, *The Vision Was There: A History of the British Movement for the Restoration of the Jews to Palestine* (London, 1956), p. 31: "Not only had his work been instrumental to the readmission of the Jews to England, but history was to show how sound had been Menasseh ben Israel's instinct which guided him to lay the Jewish people's road to the Land of Israel via the British Isles".

## BOCARRO-ROSALES AND THE MESSIANISM OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

ANTONIO JOSÉ SARAIVA

In an article published in 1972 about Menasseh ben Israel, I tried to show the Portuguese contribution to the messianic expectations of the Jews from Portugal and Spain who lived in Amsterdam in about 1640.

In 1655 a book was printed in Amsterdam called *Bonum Nuncium Israeli*, under the name of Paul Felgenhauer. This opusculum contained some letters about the imminent coming of the Messiah, addressed to Menasseh ben Israel by several millenarianists. Among the contributors we find Jacob Rosales Hebraeus.

In a letter addressed to Paul Felgenhauer and published in the same book, Menasseh names him “Immanuel Bocarus Francês, alias Jacobus Rosales Hebraeus”. The former name is his real Portuguese name latinized (Immanuel is a variant of Manuel, also in Portuguese). “Rosales” was added after his departure from Portugal when he was thirty-five.

At this time the crown of Portugal was in the possession of a Spanish king, son of Philip II of Castile, who was a grandson of Manuel of Portugal.

So Portugal, although it had the status of kingdom, a separate administration, its own language and its own overseas dominions, was ruled by a foreigner (though his mother was Portuguese), and many Portuguese wanted a national monarch.

This is the underlying mainspring for an astrological poem in octaves by Manuel Bocarro, printed in Lisbon in 1624 and called *Anacephalaeosis de Monarchia Lusitana I* (“a summary of the Lusitanian monarchy”). This book was in four parts.

The author wrote about what could be learnt from the stars about the political future of Portugal. He tried to show through astrological signs that Portugal was to be the last and the most powerful monarchy in the world; this he very clearly states in the foreword. But he does not say whether this monarchy was to have a Portuguese or a Castilian ruler. According to the status quo and legalities, Philip of Spain, to whom he dedicated this part of his book, was the king of Portugal. The stars did not predict in 1624 that in 1640 Portugal was to have, in fact, its own national

king through a coup d'état. But Bocarro announces a final part to his book, a fourth part, which he would dedicate to D. Teodósio, duke of Bragança, son of a former pretender to the throne and the most eminent member of the Portuguese nobility and "the main hero of this monarchy". The Spanish authorities prevented the new book from being printed and persecuted the author, who fled to Rome.

Here he published in 1625 a part of the forbidden sequel to the *Anacephalaeosis* (IV), together with some annotations, with the title of "Small Moonlight and Starlight of the Lusitanian Monarchy, etc."

Exiled from Portugal, Manuel Bocarro assumed the name Rosales, which had been that of an ancestor of his who, according to "Small Moonlight etc." had lived in Lisbon in the second half of the fifteenth century. He had been a Jew who had lived in the house of the duke of Bragança, D. Fernando, who was an ancestor of the duke then, D. Teodósio, and who had been murdered by King John II. This Jew had found, by means of kabbalistic methods, a hidden meaning to his name. According to him, the letters Rosales included the letters BARZEL, a word which means "iron" in Hebrew, and ES which means "fire". Together, these letters sound like "By Rosales will his name be known". "His" refers to the man who, after D. Fernando was killed, would restore his noble house.

According to Manuel Bocarro, who tells us the story, this Rosales heralds Bocarro himself, who was living under similar circumstances to those of his ancestor, and he relates the sentence "By Rosales will his name be known" to himself. Evidently he also took into consideration the duke of Bragança of that time, D. Teodósio.

In the "Small Moonlight etc.", printed in Rome, the duke is offered a shield with the arms of Portugal by a mythological nymph, but he declines the honor for the sake of the legal king of Portugal, who was Philip of Spain; but another person of the Bragança family, a son or a descendent of D. Teodósio appears to inherit the throne. This is phrased in a very confusing manner and may be interpreted in more than one way. Bocarro was trying to gratify Portuguese nationalism without offending the pride of the castilians.

Moreover, the problems of the Portuguese crown are not the only subject matter of the *Anacephalaeosis*. This book also deals with the traditional literature inspired by the fight between the Christians and the Turks – a subject which had messianic echoes. At the end of this struggle, the last and most powerful monarchy or empire of the world was to be a Portuguese one, with either a Portuguese or a Castilian king to rule it.

This, that is to say – the last empire of the world, is a subject that was dealt with in the Trovas (a form of stanza) by Bandarra (whose full name was Gonçalo Eanes Bandarra) who lived in the early sixteenth century in



a mountainous area of Portugal. These “Trovas” had been forbidden by the Inquisition, but circulated in manuscript and were very popular, specially among the “New Christians”.

Bandarra, inspired by the prophets and the apocalyptic books of the Old Testament, envisaged the day when the flock and the shepherd – in other words the faithful and their leader – would become one, united by the same Lord and the same faith. Everybody everywhere would be Christian; Jews and gentiles would believe that the Messiah, “o ungido salvador” (the annointed Savior) had come. Bandarra shows us that already in the first half of the sixteenth century there was a messianic atmosphere in Portugal among both Christians and New Christians.

This increased with two events which affected Rosales Bocarro. One is the defeat and death of the young King Sebastian at the battle of Alcácer Quibir in 1578, and with him a great part of the Portuguese nobility. The other was the change of the ruling dynasty, because Sebastian did not leave a Portuguese heir. On Sebastian’s death Philip II of Spain succeeded.

Consequently, the hope of a world empire and the coming of the Messiah, as well as the belief that Sebastian would return from the field of battle in which he had disappeared to reassume the throne, were two topics which inspired the Portuguese national aspirations in the century in which Rosales Bocarro lived.

In the *Anacephalaeosis* publication of 1624, there is a mention of Sebastian and his misfortunes (octaves 57 to 60). He is perceived as a ghost-like figure passing by in the middle of a cloud.

The growing myth of Sebastian was connected to another – that of the appearance of Christ to Afonso I of Portugal, the founder of the Portuguese monarchy, when, before the legendary victory against the Moors at the battle of Ourique, Christ had assured Afonso that his dynasty would not end and that his kingdom would become an empire of Christ’s. In the first edition of the *Anacephalaeosis* there are two allusions to the “miracle of Ourique” (octaves 58 and 75).

In December 1640, Portugal once again became an independent kingdom, and the house of Bragança was raised to the throne. D. Teodósio had died and the new king was his son John. A new edition of the *Anacephalaeosis* was prepared and came out in 1644 in Hamburg, with a Latin translation by the author himself.

The text is preceded by an introduction (*Praefatiuncula*) in which the author explains the following: the writing of the *Anacephalaeosis* was completed in 1622, and the manuscript had been given to the printers in 1624, but the inquisitor who examined it had kept some passages for himself, and had either changed or suppressed others. It was thus in this state that the work was printed in the author’s absence. He then goes on to explain

that at the request of several friends he was reprinting the original manuscript of the *Anacephalaeosis* twenty years after the censored edition.

This is what he says happened, but let's now see what really occurred.

The Hamburg edition consists of 133 octaves while the Lisbon one has 131. The author informs us in the foreword (*Praefatiuncula*) that the octaves dealing with alchemy were suppressed, and this caused a gap of twenty octaves which are replaced by a new text in another part of the composition.

Moreover, there are other changes in the verses of the octaves, which are neither accounted for or acknowledged. For instance, the name of Christ is suppressed at each mention (five) in the 1624 text. But it is very interesting that the miracle of Ourique, that is to say, the appearance of Christ to King Afonso, remains, although instead of Christ we find "the saint" or else "heaven".

For the first time the name of Bandarra emerges in the text; he was then looked upon as a national prophet of the independence of 1640. He was already very well-known in 1624 and had written the main work of the prophetic literature to which the *Anacephalaeosis* belongs. Not only is Bandarra referred to, but the name of Fernando, the ancestor of the new king, is also mentioned, as it was in Bandarra's text. But this Fernando is not the same person who is referred to by Bandarra.

Though forbidden by the Inquisition and not printed in Portugal, the importance of Bandarra increased after 1640 because the actual numbers "sixteen-forty" are in the text of the stanzas. Thus the addition of Bandarra's name in the new text contributed to the growth of the prophetic authority of the *Anacephalaeosis*.

In the article I wrote in 1972 on Menasseh, which I have already mentioned, I wrote about the contacts between the latter and the Portuguese Jesuit, Antonio Vieira, who was the most representative of the Portuguese. The fifth and last empire of the world was the main topic of their talks. The contacts between Vieira and Bocarro were indirect ones, since Vieira arrived in Portugal in 1641 and Bocarro left Portugal in 1625. But there is a curious connection between these two men, besides their dependence on Bandarra. This is their belief in a sort of recurrence of the same human being, or soul, appearing behind several masks throughout history. Bocarro seems to have believed that he himself was a new Rosales, and D. Teodósio was a new D. Fernando. In the same way, Vieira ascribed several masks to the veiled and mysterious character who would restore Portuguese monarchy and restitute Palestine to the Jews: the veiled man who had once been Sebastian, took on the mask of John of Bragança; after his death he would be replaced in the same role by his two sons, each at his own turn. There are also some other points in common between the two men. Research into this matter would be interesting.

## MENASSEH BEN ISRAEL'S APPROACH TO MESSIANISM IN THE JEWISH-CHRISTIAN CONTEXT

RIVKA SCHATZ

Menasseh ben Israel was a figure of controversy, abused by Jews, honored by intellectual gentiles, renowned as one of the most learned men in the seventeenth century, most famous for the role he played in the readmission of the Jews into England in the mid-seventeenth century. One version has it that he was born in Lisbon in 1604 to parents who were formerly "New Christians" and had returned to Judaism. Menasseh became one of the outstanding leaders of Amsterdam Jewry.

Menasseh ben Israel's approach to millenarianism is a riddle which has not yet been solved. Those who contend, ironically, that he was influenced by English, French or Portuguese millenarianism have been too glib in their assumptions. Millenarianism was a politically minded religious movement, the common denominator of all its branches being the aim to unite all Christian churches and eventually to bring about a full integration with Judaism in order to establish the Christianized Kingdom of Israel in the land of Israel with Jerusalem as its capital.

The conspicuously political nature of this movement with its worldly inclinations was considered a betrayal and a heresy by the official church institutions. Despite this fact, about seventy percent of all English clergymen were millenarians during the forties and fifties of the seventeenth century, according to reliable sources. The dogmatic assumption which was the barrier between this movement and all the churches was the belief that the second coming of Jesus would occur only after the conversion of all Jews. Hence a very complicated interdependence between the Jewish people and the Christian world was established which, far from being restricted to historical reflections on the past, was to have repercussions on future salvation.

Under the historical conditions of those days such pro-Jewish reflections, which were occasionally called philo-Semitic, might have had an enormous seductive impact on the Jewish masses and on individuals, influencing them to convert to Christianity. This might have been dangerous to the very existence of the Jewish people at this time; after their decimation and expulsion from Spain, when the survivors were dispersed all over

the world; after the rise of colonial aspirations in the wake of the discovery of America, when the stakes of the Inquisition were still burning.

Amsterdam in the seventeenth century developed into a center of real Jewish revival. Many who escaped from Spain and Portugal joined this community, where Jewish culture flourished on strictly religious halachic foundations. Menasseh ben Israel was deeply involved in the establishment of this conservative-minded Jewish community. His Portuguese and Spanish translations of Jewish sources were a major contribution to its spiritual convalescence, but his fame in Jewish history is due to his involvement in the readmission of the Jews to England, whence they had been expelled at the end of the thirteenth century. Because of his devotion to this task he had the opportunity of coming into close contact with different groups of Englishmen, most of whom revealed millenarian tendencies; some of them were living as refugees in Holland where they nurtured their dreams of freedom. During the period of Cromwell most of them had close relations with the English authorities.

Much has been written on Cromwell's attitude and that of his followers towards millenarianism. I do not intend to deal with this problem. For Jewish historians like Lucien Wolf<sup>1</sup>, who wrote at the beginning of this century, the very concept of millenarianism was abhorrent. In their rationalistic fervor they could not forgive Menasseh his close ties with these groups. Recent research has taken into account the general spiritual atmosphere, the writings and documents of those people with whom Menasseh maintained close relations; the approach of these scholars shows a greater measure of matter-of-factness and understanding. In this context I would like to mention the research of Professor Popkin on the heretical millenarian La Peyrère, who had been excommunicated, and Professor Saraiva's analysis of the affinity of Menasseh's messianic conception to that of the Portuguese clergyman Antonio Vieira. Notwithstanding the significance of these works for the understanding of Menasseh, they do not discuss Menasseh's theological arguments.

Before presenting my approach to Menasseh's messianism I would like to outline some trends in his thoughts on issues other than his messianic concerns. The prevalent prejudice that his writings are solely of a compilatory nature, not containing any original thoughts of his own prevented scholars from taking pains to tackle this problem.

Menasseh was the first Jewish thinker, who, besides his concern for a Jewish revival, was deeply interested in partaking in a dialogue with the Protestant world he was living in. This interest is reflected mainly in his Spanish and Latin books, the *lingua franca* of those days. In the preface to

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<sup>1</sup> Lucien Wolf, *Menasseh Ben Israel's Mission to Oliver Cromwell* (London, 1901).

his work *Resurrección de los Muertos* (Resurrection of the Dead) we read: “the most important teachers of Judaism wrote their most scholarly works in a ‘foreign language’ (*lingua vulgar*), like Maimonides who wrote in Arabic, Philo in Greek, Judah Abravanel in Italian etc. The great historian Josephus Flavius explains in his introduction to his Greek ‘Antiquities’ that our Sages communicated fluently with the gentiles in their own language and some Greeks showed deep interest in our matters”.

The dialogue on religious questions initiated by Menasseh with the academic world of the Dutch universities is unique, not only because it was written in the language of the time, but also because it occurred at an historic moment when the atmosphere of these universities was characterized by religious and intellectual ferment. This ferment was engendered by the rigid dogma of predestination and determinism, so deeply ingrained in Calvinism, which was prevalent in Holland at that time.

Biblical criticism was in its first stages and the philosophy of law, which flourished in free countries, questioned the divine origin of law. Men like Grotius, Vossius, Barlaeus and Beverovicius, who were the foremost scholars in their respective fields, maintained close ties with Menasseh. Most of these scholars were suspected of having been infected by heresy because of their affinity to Socinianism.

H. John MacLachlan argues that the members of this movement “were devoted to the principles of toleration and rational inquiry which were a feature of the Socinian ethos”<sup>2</sup>. But despite Hugo Grotius’ attempt to “introduce the philological and historical method into the study of Biblical science”, as S.M. Knight writes in his book on Grotius<sup>3</sup>, his approach to tradition was moderate; furthermore, he reveals much interest in traditional Jewish commentaries on the Bible. As the young Menasseh in his Bible commentaries had already presented the Rabbinic approach against the background of the classical writers, he was an ideal partner for such a dialogue.

I do not argue that Menasseh’s book *Conciliador*<sup>4</sup>, the name of which reveals its harmonistic tendencies, was in line with Socinianism. The precise contribution of this book, apart from being a completely new cultural phenomenon, has still to be examined. But what might Menasseh’s explanation in matters of Judaism have meant to these people, who had already disavowed official christology? He might have presented the Jewish ethos to them as having a closer affinity to their concept of freedom than official

<sup>2</sup> *Socinianism in Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford, 1951), p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> *The Life and Works of Hugo Grotius* (London, 1952).

<sup>4</sup> The first edition (Vol. I, Amsterdam, 1632) was sold at Bloomsbury Auction on 13 June for £2600. See the Catalogue of Chimen Abramsky, item No. 333. The first edition of Menasseh’s *Nishmat Hayyim* (1652), was sold on that occasion for £4200.

Calvinism. Indeed, his books *De la Resurrección de los Muertos* (1636), *De la Fragilidad humana* (1642) and *De termino vitae* (1639) contained answers to the questions which were in the air. He emphasized the principles of free will, of personal accountability, and of the possibility of redressing human sin by human deeds; however he admitted original sin, whilst repudiating the dogma of divine grace and compassion, which had become a Calvinist obsession. Menasseh based all his assumptions on Jewish sources without entering into an overt discussion with Christianity. Occasionally he declines to use those verses which the Christian tradition ascribes to Jesus.

Indeed, there are many elements of discussion in his writing, but they are mostly all of a Jewish nature. He refers in particular to Jewish heretics and to the Neo-Zadokites who flourished in the community of Amsterdam. Some of his books are devoted to his discussion with Uriel da Costa concerning the eternity of the soul and resurrection of the dead. Special attention should be paid to the extraordinary Hebrew book *Nishmat-Hayyim* which certainly is one of the most learned books on the problem of the eternality of the soul<sup>5</sup> apart from being an Encyclopedia of parapsychology, magic hiromancy and of course a kabbalistic and philosophical compound of Jewish teachings on the subject. A striking novelty of his philosophy seems to be his contention that belief in immortality of the soul is a primal factor to the extent that it preconditions all other principles of belief such as the uniqueness and oneness of God and the Torah being given from Heaven. This change in the hierarchy of values seems to me to be the inevitable outcome of the crisis prevailing in the Christian world concerning the problem of salvation. The point of departure of such a crisis would be the questioning of the eternality of the soul. Menasseh also alludes to the dispute between Mortera and Isaac Aboab, accepting the conservative view according to which theological sins are subject to eternal punishment. The whole setting of ideas accompanying the ardent controversy and the impact it made upon Jewish life in Amsterdam was discussed by Alexander Altmann<sup>6</sup>.

In summing up I contend that Menasseh's life style represented an open-minded culture; he was conservative as regards cardinal Jewish theological questions and Biblical criticism. In particular, he probably would have rejected the extreme Biblical criticism which emerged during the third and fourth decades of that century which undermined the authority

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<sup>5</sup> A much earlier refutation of da Costa's view had been published by Samuel da Silva: *Tratado da Immortalidade da Alma* (Amsterdam, 1623).

<sup>6</sup> "Eternality of Punishment: a theological controversy within the Amsterdam Rabbinate in the Thirties of the Seventeenth century", *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, XL (1972), pp. 1-81.

of the Bible as the sole historical source for every problem. Indeed, during his whole lifetime he was haunted by the fear that the authority of the Bible might be questioned or undermined. He even wrote a book against La Peyrère, who had shocked the Christian world with his revolutionary views in his book *Prae-Adamitae* (*Men before Adam*). It is R. Popkin's above-mentioned research<sup>7</sup> which dealt with the repercussions of La Peyrère's polygenetic theory, implying that the origins of the human race are manifold. Popkin's important contention is, that this dealt a heavy blow to the authority of the Bible which describes Adam as the only forebear of humanity.

Menasseh's book is not in our possession. However, contemporary reactions to La Peyrère, including that of Grotius, are known to us. Without exaggerating, we may contend that Menasseh's motivation for his renowned book *Spes Israelis* (*The Hope of Israel*) which brought him to the frontline of messianism, was, *inter alia*, to defend the classical Jewish-Christian belief in the total and exclusive authority of the Holy Scriptures. This idea is implicit in his preface to *The Hope of Israel*. It is hard to detach the messianic problem from other prime cultural problems. This can be demonstrated by the case of La Peyrère as well: on the one hand he was considered a heretic because of his scientific views, while on the other hand he was a fervent millenarian whose book *Du Rappel des Juifs* (*The call of the Jews*) is one of the most outstanding theological-messianic treatises<sup>8</sup>. Without going into detail I would like to emphasize that this book reveals a very political tendency: to call the Jews to unite with the Christian church for the conquest of Jerusalem and the Land of Israel under the command of the King of France.

These people were not lunatics; they reasoned in rational political terms. One of Menasseh's friends, a Portuguese clergyman of high rank who was often investigated by the Inquisition because of his ideas and relations with Menasseh, was the author of the theo-political treatise "Historia do futuro". In his interesting research on the Fifth Kingdom, Professor Saraiva has shown that this author spoke in political terms when

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<sup>7</sup> "The Development of Religious Scepticism and the Influence of Isaac La Peyrère's Pre-Adamism and Bible Criticism", in *Classical Influences on European Culture*, ed. R.R. Bolgar (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 271-280.

<sup>8</sup> Its political inclinations have been discussed by Myriam Yardeni, "La Religion de la Peyrère et le *Rappel des Juifs*", *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuse*, LI (1971), pp. 245-259. For the complex theological problem dealt with by several scholars see: Ira Robinson, "Isaac de la Peyrère and the Recall of the Jews", *Jewish Social Studies*, XL (1978), p. 126. An anti-Semitic reaction to La Peyrère's theory on the regathering of the Jews in their own land has been made by the famous mystic writer L.-C. de Sain-Martin in the eighteenth century. See F. Bartfeld, "'Le Rappel des Juifs' selon L.-C. de Sain-Martin", *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuse*, LXI (1981), pp. 137-145.

offering the readmission of the Jews to Portugal<sup>9</sup>. Menasseh did not pay heed to these appeals which were concerned with a reappraisal of the status of the Jewish people in triumphalist terms, thus engendering a "New Christian" theological approach. The Jews were referred to in these writings as "God's first-born son", "the olive tree on which the twig of Christianity was to be grafted in order to receive the privilege of messianic grace", and so on. Again, they were considered as the people who were destined to rule the whole world. Feelings of ambivalence because of the humiliating behavior towards the Jews on the one hand and high expectations that the Jews might succeed in vanquishing the Turkish empire on the other hand – the great failure of Christianity – all these were discernible everywhere.

The most interesting theo-political confrontation was that between Menasseh and the English millenarians; this is indeed the very setting of the readmission of the Jews to England. It seems that the relevant historical facts are fairly well-known to us today; these speak of English initiative and interest in closer commercial cooperation with the Jews, mainly with those living in the Caribbean islands who were *marranos* who had succeeded in escaping from the Portuguese sword after the recapture of Pernambuco. The competition between the naval powers Portugal, Spain and Holland for the favor of the Jews who were renowned as gifted merchants, was immediately translated into theological terms. This is not an ironical remark, rather, it sheds light on the nature of this philo-Semitism whose emergence was questioned by scholars: was it engendered by political interests or was it the expression of deep Christian faith? I believe that both aspects were inextricably linked in those days: prosperity in daily life was of theological significance to the believer – it was a sign of divine grace.

This is the atmosphere reflected in the English documents which deal with the readmission of the Jews to England. Thus Menasseh does not hesitate to declare in the official petition for the readmission of the Jews to England that the civil war in England was a sign of divine anger with the nation, for their cruel behavior towards the Jews in the past. Therefore the new messianic era would be characterized by the reappraisal of the Christian approach towards the Jews. Naturally the millenarians clung to the Biblical texts, the Jewish scriptures and likewise, the New Testament in order to "prove" that many signs allude to the imminent fulfillment of the ancient prophecies which are interpreted according to the Pauline tradition. The most quoted chapters are those in Daniel (7 and 8) on the Fifth Empire of the Righteous, which is soon to come. The interpretation

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<sup>9</sup> "Antonio Vieira, Menasseh ben Israel et le Cinquième Empire" *Studia Rosenthaliana*, VI (1972), pp. 25-56; Vieira's book *Historia do Futuro*, printed in Lisbon, 1755, is very rare.



of these chapters had been a bone of contention for many generations, for Jews and Christians alike. But never had there been any greater Christian enthusiasm and preparedness to expound the texts concerning the Fifth Empire as representing a Jewish-Christian collaboration. It was a precondition that in this context the triumph of the Jews consisted in the fact that they believed in Jesus as the Messiah.

D.S. Katz's description<sup>10</sup> of the literature written during the civil war shows how vital the interest was in the discovery of the Ten Tribes in South America. This was the test case for all millenarian movements: If the discovery of America was bound with the identification of the Indians with the ancient Hebrews or with their descendants, the fulfillment of the words of the ancient prophets and of the apostles as to the ingathering of the Jews in their country and their acknowledgement of Jesus as Messiah, seemed very imminent. These were considered to be overt signs and conditions for the salvation of the whole mankind.

The exegesis of certain verses of Daniel, the apocalypse of John and the Epistle to the Roman point to the political signs which were essential for millenarians in order to corroborate their beliefs. In Daniel 7:27 we read: "And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms *under the whole heavens* shall be given to the people of the Saints of the Most High, their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom and all dominions shall serve and obey them". The emphasis is on the words "under the whole heavens" which were expounded to point to the dispersion of Israel throughout the whole world. The discovery of the Lost Tribes in America meant that the messianic history was unfolding.

The apocalypse of John, Chapter 20, was conceived as emphasizing that the kingdom of a thousand years preceded the resurrection and was conceived as the Kingdom of the Jews. "Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain. And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years and threw him into the pit and shut it and sealed it over him that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years were ended. After that he must be loosed for a little while". Chapter 21 of the apocalypse includes the names of the tribes which are inscribed on the gates of the New Jerusalem which will come down from above. These and other sources which were interpreted as putting the stress on the *whole* people of Israel – in contrast to the existing Jews who include only the descendants of the two surviving tribes of Judah and Benjamin – bear witness to the central motives concerning the status of the Jewish nation in millenarian history. Millenarian thought created

<sup>10</sup> *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England 1603-1655* (Oxford, 1982).

the image of a strong physical power of military troops which were about to vanquish the Turkish empire (the dream of many Europeans), to overthrow the rule of the Pope (the dream of western Protestants) and to establish a bridge for religious unity. This would atone for the brutality against the Jews in the past and would salve their conscience and safeguard political success for all those who would be willing to join for the first time in Jewish-Christian cooperation.

I underline all these elements, because the urgent address of the English millenarians to Menasseh to approve their historico-messianic findings focused on these questions. Moreover, in my opinion Menasseh's response in his book *The Hope of Israel* expressly refers to all these arguments which are found in this apocalyptic Christian literature.

The book, *The Hope of Israel*, which I am about to discuss is far from being a regular Jewish messianic treatise, resulting from Jewish initiative. This contention has already been strengthened from the historical point of view, namely it has been proved that the initiative for composing the book was, from the start, a request imposed upon Menasseh by English authorities. As a literary phenomenon it was by no means similar to any Jewish messianic document written up to now. Even a superficial glimpse at it would reveal the astonishing fact that Menasseh does not cite even one Jewish source to support his thesis. Were it a real Jewish messianic book, Menasseh would have present this central problem in Jewish life in the traditional mode. I want to show from an analysis of the book itself that it contains the most precise answers a Jew could give to the Christian "questionnaire" of the period. This book is divided into two parts; the first one is the story of the Portuguese *marrano*, Montezinos, whose business brought him to the Cordillera mountains, where he discovered the tribe of Reuben. After many vicissitudes and hardships he returned to Amsterdam and told his story. In the second part Menasseh sums up the contemporary state of research as to the identity of the Indians and their connections with the Ten Tribes.

The version of this story about Montezinos is most likely not his own; it is rather Menasseh's, who adjusted all its details to fit the setting of English millenarian literature. This story mentions a "hidden people", i.e., from the very beginning underlines the messianic significance of their discovery. Since the time of Fourth Esdras the tribes were depicted as "hidden". This book, which was probably a Jewish book appended to the New Testament, is the only source quoted by Menasseh several times. In the Montezinos story, one Indian's remark is, "What have we done to the holy people, the treasure of all nations?" The remark reflects those feelings of guilt towards the Jewish people which are peculiar to the millenarian literature, but on the other hand it may also indicate some hidden

fears as to their "suspected-expected" power and the judgement of history. Indeed, sometimes it is difficult to decide whether it is Judophobia or philo-Semitism which is the prevalent motivation. Aware of these ambivalent feelings, Menasseh promised that anybody assisting the cause of the Jews would participate in the bliss of the kingdom of righteousness. This idea did not originate with Menasseh, but he fostered it, in particular in his book *Piedra Gloriosa*, which I will deal with later on in this paper. Jewish domination of the whole world is an idea which was mentioned in the story by the elders of the tribe of Reuben as a quotation; the elders said: "the God of Israel is the God of truth, and everything that is written on the tablets of stone is true and at the end of time they will dominate all the nations on the earth". Again, the fact, that, according to this version, all members of the tribe immediately recognized that Montezinos was a Jew, was destined to corroborate the thesis as to the unity of the *whole* people of Israel, including the Ten Tribes; or perhaps it would be better to say: including the Tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

Sometimes it seems that the issue of the Ten Tribes, which is so conspicuous in millenarian literature, overshadows the problem of the readmission of the Jews to England. Indeed, these tribes were better candidates for conversion, for they were not guilty of having murdered the Messiah as they were already living in exile at that time. But, as to Menasseh, he was interested in emphasizing Judah and Benjamin, the forebears of the present European Jews. In the millenarian literature these tribes were called Israelites as opposed to the European ones who were called Jews.

Even the idea of racial purity is mentioned in the story. One Indian discloses that the Israelite tribes had never mixed with other tribes. The notion of purity of blood (*pureza de sangre*) had been adopted from its Spanish and Portuguese milieu<sup>11</sup> and cherished among Jewish people stemming from Spanish origin. Menasseh mentions this "purity" again in the *Humble Address* to the English Parliament and in *The Hope of Israel* since it bears testimony to the tribes' ancient identity. Having faithfully preserved the Jewish secret the Indians expect to be rewarded after the liquidation of the Spaniards. Montezinos' version clearly distinguishes between the people of the West Indies and the Ten Tribes. The same holds true for Menasseh's "interpretation" of the story. However, he reported that the most recent Spanish research identified the West Indians with the tribes. The topicality of the report is obvious.

Menasseh's testimony and confirmation was as important to the English as the scientific corroboration of their thesis. It seems to me that for Menasseh the scientific aspect was of major importance in order to refute

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<sup>11</sup> See Yosef Kaplan's article in this volume.

La Peyrère's polygenetic thesis; indeed here was a common interest shared by Menasseh and the English.

The English availed themselves of Menasseh's testimony in order to convert the Indians to Christianity and to dominate the whole American continent. For England, millenarianism was a tool of outstanding importance to the process of colonization. England competed with Spain, a country which Menasseh frequently condemned. He also denounced Portugal's part in the forced conversion of the Jews. But he never alludes to the intentions of the English to convert the Jews to Christianity. This is the great mystery concerning Menasseh's attitude. It should be clearly stressed, however, that Menasseh never endorsed the millenarian conception pertaining to eschatological Christian-Jewish cooperation. The only sentence which mentions the messianic aspect in *The Hope of Israel* says that he, Menasseh, would find out all the places on this earth, where the various tribes of Israel are living and he would certainly "endorse our return to the land of our fathers at the end of time".

It is possible that the English understood that for the time being they had to be satisfied with what Menasseh was prepared to offer them in return for the official readmission of the Jews, for indeed they were not naive. In his petition he had stressed that they should be allowed to enter England in order to serve their God overtly. In *The Humble Address* he spoke in political terms invoking Cromwell's spirit of tolerance and that of the anti-royalist revolutionaries; in my opinion he maintained this political line even in *The Hope of Israel*.

His politico-religious argument was that salvation would come only when Israel was dispersed throughout the *whole* world, including England; this was based on his personal interpretation of Daniel 12:7, which could be rendered into English as: "and that when the *dispersion* of<sup>12</sup> the power of the holy people comes to an end, all these things would be accomplished". This meant of course that an English diaspora was necessary as well; thus he answered the English on his own terms. They hoped for the conversion of the Jews; he responded: let us in and let us live as Jews. They understood his answer and tried to press him to go farther. By the end of December 1649 when the draft of *The Hope of Israel* was already in the possession of Homes and Jessey – both of them distinguished millenarians

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<sup>12</sup> RSV: and that when the shattering of etc. Menasseh's interpretation is based on a Hebrew word play *napez* – *nafoz*. In tracing back Menasseh's possible source of interpretation, I could find none of the ancient commentators expounding the verse in a similar way. Avraham Halevi, however, a mystic who survived the Spanish expulsion seems to be the first one to voice this existential interpretation to approve the necessity of the new dispersion: See G. Scholem, "The Kabbalist Avraham ben Eliezer Halevi", *Kirjath Sepher*, II 1925(26), p. 131 (in Hebrew).

– they wrote him a letter which was published by another millenarian, Felgenhauer, in *Bonum Nuncium Israeli* (1655). “Bonum Nuncium” means “good tidings” and, indeed, it comprises letters and other documents proving the imminence of the second advent. An exchange of letters with Menasseh on the messianic topic was published there as well. As far as I managed to trace the scholarly interpretations of this letter, all were of the opinion that Menasseh had made concessions to the Christian demands. In my view this is wrong.

The letter seems to reproach Menasseh not only for his disappointing answer as to the possibility of Jewish-Christian cooperation, but also for his negative view that the coming of the Messiah was imminent. It seems that Menasseh had previously written to Homes that the salvation of Israel is not conditional on the coming of the (their?) Messiah; it seems that he did not want to make any statement as to the time of His coming.

Homes goes further by arguing, somewhat cautiously, that the Egyptians knew before the Jews that Moses would be the redeemer; in other words, the Christians are better informed than the Jews about the time of the Messiah’s coming. A very important remark by Homes is that the refusal of Jewish-Christian cooperation would impinge on the credibility of the Bible which should be tested in the future rather than in the past. A close reading of Homes in his theological discussion with Menasseh shows that he disapproves of Menasseh’s use of the concept “martyr” for those Jews who were murdered for their faith (this concept is indeed mentioned in *The Hope of Israel*; it is evident that Menasseh had in mind the victims of the persecutions by the Inquisition in Spain and Portugal). Homes argues that this concept is taken from the New Testament, where it refers only to those witnesses, the victims who had died for their Christian faith; but it never should be applied to those who died through keeping the Jewish Law – as, of course, was the case with the victims of the Inquisition. But I am not quite sure whether this remark is meant to be scholarly or provocative. The main part of the letter reads as follows:

“... I have not yet received a reply from you in your letter concerning the position of the Ten Tribes, something that I requested in my letters, not out of craftiness or curiosity, I seek the truth, so that imposters may not thrust themselves upon us as being Hebrew. Someone has recently written that the Indians of New England were born from the Ten Tribes. Others countered that they are Tartars, others that they are some other people. I am distracted in my mind until your letters give me certainty.

You appear to be delighted by the Apologia of D. Nicolas<sup>13</sup>. I hope (not to boast) that you will see more books (not to say greater ones) when my

<sup>13</sup> *Apology for the honourable nation of the Jews and all the Sons of Israel* (London, 1648). Nicolas was the secretary of Cromwell.

discussion of the thousand years is published. This work keeps me so occupied that the letter due to come to you is being delayed.

'Martyrs' are mentioned in your remarks, something which if I am not mistaken, is unknown to the Old Testament. Certainly it is in the New Testament that well-known men, declaring Christ and His good News at His death, were witnesses to some truth and were called in Greek 'Martyrs'. But (pardon be granted to my liberty of conscience which I shall very gladly have granted you in your writing) the pontifical books after the Tridentine council should not in any way be considered Christian, nor would it seem to me that to lay down one's life in today's observance of the Mosaic Law be the practice of Martyrs. Indeed that Law and its application ought to have already been abolished as stated in the Old Testament – Deut 18, v. 18-19 [I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And who ever will not give heed to my words which he shall speak in my name I myself will require it of him] Psalm 50, v. 6-15, 23, Isaiah 66, v. 1-3. As once, many years having passed, when the greatest liberty was granted to the Jews in not sacrificing, you, nevertheless, believe that you yourselves are worshipping God truly . . . .

Please send me the discourse which you call *Concerning the affection due from Christians towards the Hebrews* [which unfortunately is not at our disposal], so that in so far as it lies in my power, it may be type-set and given to the public.

Concerning the time of the coming of the Messiah, which you state to be uncertain and say that you support this uncertainty by experience, the reply is easy. While Daniel was formerly ignorant of this, it was at last revealed to him and, from his books, to us. And albeit that some (whom you name) talking wildly in their calculations are . . . a maze of errors, the prophecies on this matter are not to be abandoned on this count as if they were useless. Indeed, as we expect in the manner of Daniel ch. 9 v. 2-21, like the evening of life the nearer they approach the time of liberation, the more clearly the revelations shine forth that concern these matters. The Egyptians, the most barbarian of the tribes (on your own authority, excellent Sir) foresaw the birth of Moses at a time when the Israelites did not know that a liberator had been born. So why should the Christians, embracing the Scriptures, not have foreseen the coming of your Messiah later?

On his coming (taking difference with your erudition, asserting that your salvation does not depend on His coming – something that causes me to gape with astonishment) our eternal salvation and especially your eternal salvation is based. For if it were true that He has not yet come and it were doubtful whether He would be coming, the entire structure of the prophecies collapses and the whole complex of the Old Testament falls to the ground. Then all is over for the truth of the scriptures, all is over for *our* salvation and *your* salvation. And if any appear to be asserting this, then the passion of Christ the Messiah (Psal. 22 Psal. 53), the resurrection (Psal. 16), the ascension (Psal. 68), the sitting at the right hand of the Father (Psal. 110), the power ruling over all things in the manner of newly created Adam (Psal. 2, 8), none of these are asserted. But all these things properly combined, the advent of the Messiah, the son of David, the departure, the return – they sufficiently declare, by way of refutation the truth of Scripture. I do not stress the New Testament which with equal portents of miracles, was commended to us, as

the Old Testament was to Israel. However, we gladly support the Hebrews and would that we could support them much more! But we do not look for merit nor to acquire anything by merit (an idea unknown to the Bible). Reward is given by *Grace*, not merit".<sup>14</sup>

Menasseh explains in his answer to Felgenhauer that the political situation was ripe, however, for the coming of the Messiah and that there were already signs of Israel's domination over the nations "they are likely to fill the whole span of the earth". But he adds, that we cannot be sure of it before the coming of Elijah, the herald of salvation.

I would like to make some remarks on Menasseh's last answer to the millenarians.

His book *Piedra Gloriosa* (*The precious stone*) written in 1655, which became very famous because of Rembrandt's four etchings attached to some of its copies, is dedicated to the Dutch scholar Isaac Vossius. In the book, Menasseh dwelt on the phrase "a stone (which) was cut out by a human hand" (Dan 2: 34) as a symbol of the Messiah. In the introduction Menasseh expresses his deep gratitude to Vossius; but close reading reveals allusions to a disagreement with him, however dressed in very polite language. Menasseh stresses that this is the *Jewish* messianic interpretation. The main point of the exegesis is the contention that the Hebrew Bible, including the Book of Daniel, envisions future history till the coming of the Messiah, which seems to be in line with the arguments of millenarians like the above mentioned Vieira who called his book *Historia do futuro* (*History of the future*). The revelation to Daniel does not announce the imminent coming of the Messiah; it only aims at strengthening the faith in the coming of the promised Fifth Kingdom. This kingdom will be eternal and everlasting and will never be broken.

After the expulsion from Spain the bulk of Jewish Messianic literature was aimed against the Pope and the Christian world; now with Menasseh its polemic address was the Moslem world. Menasseh could have never agreed with Abravanel that the fourth Roman kingdom was identical with Christendom<sup>15</sup>. Another major argument pertains to the dispersion of the Jews as being an existential necessity, as their concentration in one spot would have brought about their extermination (a sociological view which was shared by him and by the Maharal of Prague!<sup>16</sup>): "Aquí mostro que aunque pareció maldición espazirse el pueblo en tantas partes, Asya, Africa, y Europa, desto mismo resulta su eternidad! (Here it was demon-

<sup>14</sup> *Bonum Nuncium Israeli* (Amsterdam, 1655), pp. 103-106.

<sup>15</sup> See my article: "Some Characteristics of the Rise of Politico-Messianism after the Expulsion from Spain, *Da'at*, XI (1983), pp. 53-66 (in Hebrew).

<sup>16</sup> See my article, "Existence and Eschatology in Maharal's teaching", *Immanuel*, XIV (1982), pp. 86-97; XV (1984), pp. 62-72.

strated that although the dispersion of a people over so many parts of the world, Asia, Africa and Europe; was indeed a malediction it, indeed, safeguarded the eternity of the Jews).

The most interesting point is his description of the messianic age as an enlightened, tolerant, rational and righteous Jewish kingdom; again, he does not forget to stress that Jewish history represents universal history, *i.e.*, the Hebrew Bible contains the ancient history of the *whole* of mankind. Everything which has been taken away from Israel will be restored to them, like to Job. They will not take revenge on the nations, even if they have to seize the sword, for their strength will not be in their hands but rather in the word of God.

In summing up we may contend that Menasseh's Politeia is the same as that of Maimonides. Its worldly nature and its existence in time stand out against the general Christian concept of the "Kingdom of the Spirit". Last but not least, his outspoken contention that the Mosaic law would be its foundation could not mislead anybody as to Menasseh's real intention.

Menasseh offers the Christians open doors to Jerusalem where they would be able to serve God according to their beliefs. He also expresses his gratitude to the kingdoms of Poland, Italy etc. for having given shelter to Jews, and delivers a humanistic speech stressing knowledge and mercy as the major values of mankind. Menasseh contends that the Fifth Empire is not symbolized in the Bible by a beast but by the Son of Man, the *rational* man (*hijo de hombre racional*) who will rule the world in a "natural way", which is superior to the beasts' rule. He possibly had in mind the ruling of the country by natural law – an idea very much discussed at a time when the problem of legislation and its relation to the Bible was of major concern. This kingdom will be universal, when all pagan nations reach the level of the Mosaic Law. This rule will be strong, stable and enduring unlike all the kingdoms which preceded it. The holy nation which will be given the sovereignty is Israel, as is written "and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples" (Gen. 49:10). All monarchies will fade away; the kingdom of Israel will be everlasting.

Menasseh presents the Jewish messianic ideal (which, by the way, had no kabbalistic coloring at all!) without taking heed of the loud cries pressing for the conversion of the Jews to the Christian faith. Even the discussion in the Christian community between Moses Wall and M.P. Spencer<sup>17</sup>, which was aroused by Dury's translation of *The Hope of Israel* and focused on the prospects of converting the Jews, could not induce him to give a clear unequivocal answer. His indirect answer was contained in his

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<sup>17</sup> See the third edition of the *Hope* which appeared as an appendix to the above mentioned book of Lucien Wolf, pp. 1-71.



repeated descriptions of Jewish messianism; thus nobody could be mistaken as to his real intentions.

A Jewish-Christian messianic symbiosis was not realized in this case. Perhaps the saga of Menasseh shows how it happened that the demand for Jews turned out to be a demand from the Jews. However, the Christian western impact on Jewish messianism comes to the fore far in the east, in the movement of Sabbatai Şevi. Summarizing in brief the ideas Menasseh stands for would not be out of place at present. In my opinion he was deprived of the esteem he deserved as a Jewish theologian and even as a person of historical daring. Historians such as Kayserling<sup>18</sup> and Wolf were never really inclined to understand how much the role of Judaic revivalism or the freedom of displaying it to the Christian world, meant to Menasseh. Even the late Cecil Roth<sup>19</sup> did not favor him. All of them tended to abuse his kabbalistic inclination and were therefore reluctant to understand his real contribution to the Jewish Renaissance. These historians do not endeavor to assess Menasseh's work in the wider cultural field, and it is Roth who particularly stresses the "compiling" nature of his writings: such harsh judgements do not seem to provoke the historian to re-evaluate his position, nor increase his curiosity as regards Menasseh's motivation for writing. The "Sitz im Leben" – if I may use the expression – of this prolific writer was totally disregarded, although everybody mentions the undisputed fact that his writings were very well known and disseminated by the most celebrated scholars of the time.

When Menasseh was consulted by Beverovicus, one of the foremost scholars in Holland, to represent the Jewish attitude to some of the current philosophical or theological problems, Kayserling noted that: "He yielded to his flattering request as might have been expected"<sup>20</sup>. In the eyes of historians, Menasseh always "yields", he never triumphed in their eyes, he never aimed at fulfilling anything, he never gained anything. In the philosophical and political arenas alike he was only used.

Although Wolf himself was the historian who proved that the political initiative which had a millenarian flavor emerged from circles surrounding Cromwell, or from Cromwell himself, he never failed to point out Menasseh's deficiencies and condemned him for succumbing to the philo-Semitic spirit of the millenarians. When speaking about Cromwell's initiative in the whole readmission affair, Wolf summarizes as follows: "It is hard to believe Cromwell had any sympathy with the wilder motives actu-

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<sup>18</sup> M. Kayserling, "The Life and Labours of Menasseh ben Israel", in *Miscellany of Hebrew Literature*, (London, 1877).

<sup>19</sup> Roth, *A Life of Menasseh ben Israel* (Philadelphia, 1945).

<sup>20</sup> Kayserling, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

ating the Jewish Rabbi! . . . it was no longer a question of religious toleration or of the hastening of the millennium, but purely a question of political expediency”<sup>21</sup>.

Both Kayserling and Wolf dwelt on the problem of whether the readmission of the Jews into England should be understood in religious terms or rather in political ones. Kayserling stressed the religious impact on Cromwell’s policy, while Wolf chose the political view, thus underlining Cromwell’s colonialistic ambitions. Wolf’s general tendency is to prove that neither the millenarians as a religious movement, nor the independents as fighters for freedom, can account for the readmission. Rather, the sole force which was behind the readmission was the English spirit of democracy, one which an English Jew will naturally believe in. The importance of Menasseh is very conspicuously diminished especially while historians tried to detach the religious ingredient from the political one in English society of those days.

On the one hand Menasseh is rebuked for having overstressed the religious element, on the other hand for not having any political understanding, as it were. Wolf for instance calls Menasseh “a puppet in the hands of Cromwell”. Kayserling, being a strict rationalist, especially disliked Cromwell for his mystical involvement – as he thought – and wrote about him saying: “He regarded himself in the light of a divinely inspired being, of a Messiah, who had the will and the authority to hasten the advent of an era ardently desired by the Jewish people” (p. 30). Of course, Kayserling does not deny that Menasseh had a political interest of his own, but nevertheless does not consider him politically minded to the extent that this might undermine Menasseh’s alleged kabbalistic mysticism. Kayserling writes: “Menasseh was far more interested in the success of the revolutionary party. He was aware that the army of the Independents had demanded from Parliament liberty of conscience and equality of all religious denominations” (p. 30). But in the same breath he declares: “He shows not the remotest trace of independent thought or of critical and well-digested knowledge . . . he cannot possibly form clear ideas or elevate his faculties to purely philosophical reasoning so long as he derives his notions from the speculations of the Cabbalists” (p. 31).

The historian Carl Gebhardt, while delineating the spiritual situation in Jewish circles in Amsterdam, wrote in his book *Die Schriften des Uriel da Costa* (1922) as follows: “The majority of the Jews chose the way of imitation, a way directed by superficial and pale figures as that of Menasseh ben Israel, for they accepted the superstitions of kabbalah not really its mysti-

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<sup>21</sup> Wolf, *Menasseh ben Israel’s Mission to Oliver Cromwell* (London, 1901), p. xxix.

cism. Later on the Sephardic Jews ceased to exist as a people, they became Ashkenasim" (p. XXVI).

This distorted view of Gebhardt, both sociological and spiritual, accounts no doubt, either for his over enthusiasm in favor of some ideal image of the Sephardic Jews or for the contrary – for his outstanding dislike for the less philosophical elements of kabbalah, as for instance the theory of migration of souls etc.

It is almost unnecessary to stress that I don't share Gebhardt's view of Menasseh's "paleness" and "superficiality"; this does not seem to me to be an adequate description of the "battleground" of Amsterdam either. Gebhardt proved greater understanding of the subject on other occasions. His definition of the cultural crisis of Amsterdam Jewry as resulting inevitably from the illusion that they could resume a Jewish renaissance at the point where their ancestors had been forced to stop, at least two hundred years beforehand, seems to be an interesting formulation delivered by him. Yet, this posing of the problem should be reconsidered and re-evaluated but not until we analyze the Spanish and Portuguese material which is extant in numerous manuscripts and which will shed more light on these men and their community.

Coming back to Menasseh, I would rather emphasize his tremendous effort to cope with contemporary problems, trying to bridge the gap between the old and the new. We might surprisingly enough face the problem of a dialectical process, namely, that a conservative renaissance, even a flourishing one, could furnish the seed-bed for both Spinozism and Sabbateanism. There is no doubt that Menasseh did not represent either of them, he could not have been blamed for not having foreseen what history still had in store for Jewish fate.

Menasseh's vital refutation of da Costa's heresy which seems to burst forth from the constraints of established Judaism, bears witness to an extreme endeavor for restoration and preservation of what had been gained in the socio-cultural Jewish society; and presentation of the bulk of Judaism as competitive in the free Protestant society. Whether or not this immense effort to readapt Judaism to the new conceptual world of freedom, was to bear fruit, was up to history to tell. It seems to me that however vulnerable Jewish social physiognomy of that time might look – because of the great conflicts prevailing – it was due to men like Menasseh who made a very solid contribution to stabilizing Jewish life, that Amsterdam Jewry could cope and not break down.

In spite of the fact that his writings bear a messianic flavor, this was by no means a form of radicalism or millenarianism; it could not have paved the way for radical Sabbateanism which indeed found its stronghold in Amsterdam several years after the passing away of Menasseh.

Out of pure curiosity I once asked some of my colleagues, historians, what they thought Menasseh's stand would be, should he have survived to the days of the beginning of the Sabbatean movement. All of them expressed unequivocally that he would certainly have joined the movement. As a matter of fact, some of Menasseh's best friends were among the first men to do so, such as Isaac Aboab, Moshe Raphael d'Aguilar, Raphael Supino, and many others. For my part, I do not agree with the commonly held view that radical thinking emerged in Judaism jointly with messianic belief. This view is a result of increasing interest in Sabbateanism which has indeed been, from its beginning, a paradigm of both radicalism and messianism.

## MENASSEH BEN ISRAEL AS A MEETING POINT OF JEWISH AND EUROPEAN HISTORY: SOME SUMMARY COMMENTS

MICHAEL HEYD

As somewhat of an “outsider” to the fascinating topic of Menasseh ben Israel, I cannot claim to offer any substantial contribution to the subject, nor can one summarize this rich conference in an exhaustive manner. What I wish to do is to point to certain themes and problems which seem to me worth stressing and which may also be open to further research and discussion.

The importance of this workshop, I believe, has been in bringing together scholars of Jewish history, European and American historians, historians of science and historians of kabbalah and Jewish thought. It thus helped to bridge the gap which sometimes still exists between students of Jewish history and so-called “general” historians. Menasseh ben Israel is a natural, indeed ideal, focus for such an encounter, given his role as a meeting point of Jewish kabbalah and Jewish messianic aspirations on the one hand, and Christian neo-Platonism and millenarianism on the other.

How to account for this remarkable fusion of Jewish and Christian currents of thought in the mid-seventeenth century? The conference has provided several answers to this question. First of all, the special nature of the Dutch Jewish community should be taken into account, constituted as it was of *ex-Marranos*, former “New Christians”, who brought with them from the Iberian Peninsula many of the intellectual traditions prevalent at that time. On the other hand, there was a growing interest among Christian intellectuals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in things Jewish, particularly in Hebrew, a trend that has been surveyed by Mordechai Feingold in his paper. Most intriguing, however, and central to several of the papers in this workshop was the role of the Jews in European millenarian thought of that period, particularly in English millenarianism. This clearly brought about a new openness towards the Jews. How to explain this new attitude among Christian intellectuals and theologians? Amos Funkenstein has posed this challenge before the conference by pointing to the fact that the theoretical elements concerning the role of the Jews in the eschatological scheme may be found already in medieval Christian

thought. Yet, this challenge can be met by emphasizing – as Amos Funkenstein and other participants have done – several new factors which emerged in the course of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The Reformation, with its stress on the Bible, and particularly, on the Old Testament, clearly brought to the fore the issue of the Jews and their role in the plan of salvation. Ultimately, the Reformation also brought about a new conception of time and a new view of history as the arena in which salvation will take place, although it should be stressed that only towards the end of the sixteenth century, such a conception gained the upper hand over the a-historical Augustinian view. This seems to be the background for the emergence of millennial thought within leading circles of European society at that period, as distinguished from the radical millenarianism of heretical and marginal groups in the late Middle Ages. And as Professor Funkenstein has pointed out, early modern millenarianism was primarily political and practical, whereas the medieval millennial ideal was largely monastic and contemplative. It is in the context of this emergence of millennial thought – discussed in the papers of Avihu Zakai, Arthur Williamson, and David Katz – that the role of the Jews and their expected conversion becomes prominent among Christian theologians and intellectuals who thus manifest greater openness toward the Jews. Finally, however, what is remarkable about the phenomenon of Menasseh ben Israel and his milieu is the concomitance of rising messianic fervor among both Christian and Jewish circles in the mid-seventeenth century. Is that a mere coincidence, with little mutual influence, as some historians have argued (most notably, Gershom Scholem), or should one try and explain this concomitance in historical terms? We shall return to that question towards the end of our comments.

The Jewish-Christian encounter, if not symbiosis, as manifested in the career of Menasseh ben Israel is in any case surely remarkable. It has been stressed in this workshop by Richard Popkin, Jan Van den Berg, Antonio José Saraiva, and David Katz who all referred in various ways to the common language and common intellectual heritage of Menasseh and his Christian interlocutors. Other participants (Harold Fisch, Amos Funkenstein, Henry Méchoulan and Rivka Shatz) have emphasized the conceptual limitations of that encounter and the many misunderstandings which were embedded in it. Indeed, I believe we should pay special attention to those limitations precisely in order to appreciate properly the significance of the Christian-Jewish encounter in the middle of the seventeenth century.

The limitations are evident first of all in the attitudes of Jews and Christians towards messianism. Professor Fisch has suggested that the differences should be drawn along pragmatic-political lines versus mystical-

millenarian ones. He regards Menasseh's messianism as typical to mainline Judaism in its political orientation and ongoing dialogue with history, whereas Christian millenarianism is essentially mystical and occult in his view. In this respect, Sabbatai Ševi is closer to Christian millenarianism than to mainline Judaism. Yet, Christian millenarianism was often political and pragmatic too, especially in that period, as we have just mentioned. The differences seem to me to lie rather in the messianic conceptions themselves. Key terms such as *Parousia* or *Millennium* are strictly Christian of course, and the question whether one expects the Messiah to come for the first time or one waits for the Second Coming cannot be passed over lightly. Most important, however, is the issue of conversion, which for Christian millenarians was an integral, indeed crucial, part in their attitude towards the Jews. Professor Méchoulan has analyzed the way in which the non-Jew was seen in Menasseh's scheme, and has stressed the *cautious* attitude of Menasseh towards the Christian approach, principally given its wish to convert the Jews. (Nor should one forget Menasseh's cautious attitude towards speculations concerning messianism itself, the exact date of the coming of the Messiah, or the issue of the Lost Tribes, as Professor Popkin has pointed out.) On the other hand, Ernestine van der Wall has stressed in her paper the limitations of "philo-Judaism" in the thought of Serrarius, and the existence of traditional images of the Jews as those who rejected Christ, side by side with his new openness. Both Jews and Christians, then, were conscious of the deep differences in their mutual perceptions, alongside their seemingly common hopes and concerns.

There is, however, another limitation to Jewish-Christian contacts which we should take into account – that of Menasseh himself within the Jewish community in Amsterdam. He was clearly not typical to his community, and his Christian friends were aware of that as is evident from Vossius' letter to Simon de Beaumont: "Although the Jews are usually hostile against us, this Jew is just a little friendlier towards us. For that reason he had difficulties with his own people". Interestingly enough, no paper in this workshop has focused on *Jewish* attitudes to Menasseh, except for Asa Kasher' paper which deals with references to Menasseh in *subsequent* Hebrew halachic literature, and a few hints in the papers of Jonathan Israel, Gérard Nahon and Yosef Kaplan. We need to know more about Menasseh's standing within his own community, and about other contacts between Jews and Christians in that period in order to fully assess the significance of the Jewish-Christian encounter which the career of Menasseh ben Israel exemplifies.

Besides the conceptual and social limitations of the Jewish-Christian "symbiosis", however, there is a chronological limitation. It is a symbiosis limited mostly to the middle decades of the seventeenth century. This

brings me to a broader context in which, I believe, our topic should be examined – the so-called “general crisis of the seventeenth century”. Two papers have alluded to this crisis. Yosef Kaplan’s paper in its first section has dealt with the concept of “conservación”, a concept current in Iberian political thought which has entered also into the discourse of the Jewish community in Amsterdam in a very interesting way. In both milieus it was a term denoting a reaction to “crisis”, to religious, political and social instability. Jonathan Israel, in order to explain the changes of Jewish immigration movements and colonization, referred extensively to the political crises of the period in Spain following the death of Olivares, in Brazil in 1645, and in the eastern Mediterranean, in Candia.

I would like to argue that the very effervescence of millenarian thought and messianic movements in the mid-seventeenth century, both in Christian and Jewish societies, should also be connected with the social, political and intellectual crises of the period. Professor Popkin has suggested on another occasion that seventeenth-century millennial thought was, *inter alia*, a response to the crisis of scepticism at that time<sup>1</sup>. English millenarianism was clearly tied to the social, political and religious crisis leading up to the Civil War and following it. While I am by no means qualified to judge on the subject of Jewish messianism in that period, it seems to me that it cannot be dissociated from the upheavals in Jewish society both in western and in eastern Europe. Indeed, this link to an over-all crisis in European society – Christian as well as Jewish – may provide one clue towards the understanding of the concomitance of Christian and Jewish messianic fervor in that period. It may also serve as an explanation for the intriguing ties between Jews and Christians in that particular time. For the crisis was not just a social and political one. It was a crisis concerning religious and intellectual authorities, and above all perhaps, concerning the *boundaries* of the communities. In England, a large part of the discussion, especially after 1647, focused on the nature and extent of the Political Nation. Across the Channel, in Amsterdam, as Yosef Kaplan has shown, the Jewish community was preoccupied with the way in which *its* social boundaries should be drawn. More broadly, however, the boundaries of the “Respublica Christiana” itself were becoming less clear and this fact may have facilitated the contacts between Jews and Christians in that period. Ernestine van der Wall has pointed out that in the views of a Christian millenarist such as Serrarius, for example, the crucial line was that dividing Jewish

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<sup>1</sup> R.H. Popkin, “The Third Force in Seventeenth-Century Thought: Skepticism, Science and Millenarianism”, in *The Prism of Science: The Israel Colloquium in the History, Philosophy and Sociology of Science*, Vol. II (Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science, 95), ed. Edna Ullmann Margalit (Dordrecht, 1986), pp. 21-50.



and Christian millenarians from the non-millenarians, not Jews from Christians. If the edge of the conversion question has been somewhat blunted in that period, it may indeed be for the same reason. Similarly, the debate over the Indians and the Lost Ten Tribes, discussed by Professor Popkin, can be seen as a manifestation of the weakening of traditional boundaries and the search for new types of identity.

This leads me to my last subject. For a proper assessment of Menasseh and his role, and for a proper appreciation of Judeo-Christian contacts around the middle of the century, we need, I believe, to look also at the *next* generation, the so-called “post-crisis generation”: the period after the Interregnum, Menasseh ben Israel, and the Sabbatean movement. In that period, 1670-1710, there is growing social and political stabilization, collective boundaries are clearly redrawn, and political, intellectual and religious authorities – partly traditional, partly new – are gradually established<sup>2</sup>. In this context, it seems that there is no longer a place for an intermediate personality like Menasseh, though exchanges and discussions between Jews and Christians continue along traditional lines, as the exchange between Philip van Limborch and Orobio de Castro may testify. Nevertheless, the interrelations and inter-penetration of Jewish and Christian history do not cease. This can be seen, for example, precisely in one of the characteristic features of that generation – the critique of “enthusiasm”. Professor Jacob was right to distinguish, in one of his interventions in our workshop, between “enthusiasm” and millenarianism, yet for many critics, millenarian movements such as that of Sabbatai Şevi were a clear manifestation of “enthusiasm”. It would be worthwhile to examine the ways in which Christian critics of enthusiasm made use of Sabbatai Şevi and the Sabbatean movement. One famous example is Evelyn’s *History of the Three late famous Impostors*, published in 1669, which included “The History of Sabbatai Şevi, The Pretended Messiah of the Jewes”, based largely on the account of Sir Paul Rycaut, secretary for the Levant Company in Smyrna<sup>3</sup>. This text, however, was by no means unique. In the early eighteenth century, as the so-called “French Prophets” (Huguenot refugees of the Camisard revolt who claimed to have divine inspirations) arrived in England, one of the many tracts published against them was entitled *The Devil of Delphos, or the Prophet of Baal*<sup>4</sup>. It discussed

<sup>2</sup> See Theodore K. Rabb, *The Struggle for Stability in Early Modern Europe* (New York, 1975).

<sup>3</sup> The section on Sabbatai Şevi has been reprinted by the Augustan Reprint Society: John Evelyn, *The History of Sabbatai Şevi, The Suppos'd Messiah of the Jews*, Introduction by Christopher W. Grose (William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, Los Angeles: The Augustan Reprint Society, No. 131, 1968).

<sup>4</sup> Anon., *The Devil of Delphos, or the Prophet of Baal* (London, 1709). On the French Prophets in England, see Hillel Schwartz, *The French Prophets: The History of a Millenarian Group in Eight-*

various prophets who turned out to be impostors, chief among them – Sabbatai Şevi. As a third example we can mention Jean-Alphonse Turretini, the “liberal” Genevan theologian of the early eighteenth century, who in his *Compendium Historiae Ecclesiasticae* devoted most of the short section “De Judaeis” to Sabbatai Şevi<sup>5</sup>. It is worth noting, however, that Turretini mentioned Menasseh ben Israel, together with Orobio de Castro and others, as the outstanding Rabbis of the seventeenth century, and in no way connected him with either Sabbatai Şevi, the false Messiah, or with Spinoza the atheist.

Indeed, established Christian intellectuals and Churchmen were fighting in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries on two fronts – with the growing danger of deism and atheism (usually connected with the names of Hobbes and Spinoza) on the one hand, and against enthusiasm and “false messianism” (though not necessarily against millenarianism) on the other. As we have learnt from Yosef Kaplan’s book on Orobio de Castro, a similar ideological battle was waged in the Jewish community, against Spinoza and his covert disciples like Bredenburg on the one hand, against Sabbatai Şevi and his followers on the other. I would suggest that in this parallel of ideological confrontation one may seek the links between the Jewish and Christian communities in the generation after Menasseh. In Christian society, this double-edged polemic led to a growing “liberalization” of orthodoxy and to greater reliance on reason. It might be interesting to know what were the effects of the parallel polemic on the Jewish rabbinical establishment.

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*eenth Century England* (Berkeley, 1980). On the opposition to the French Prophets, see Schwartz’ earlier book, *Knives, Fools, Madmen, and that Subtle Effluvia: A Study of the Opposition to the French Prophets in England, 1706-1710* (Gainsville, 1978), and my own article “La réaction à l’enthousiasme et la secularisation des sensibilités religieuses au début du dix-huitième siècle”, *Problèmes d’histoire du Christianisme*, XIII (1984), pp. 5-38.

<sup>5</sup> Jean-Alphonse Turretini, *Compendium historiae ecclesiasticae a Christo nato usque ad annum MDCC* (Halle, Magdeburg, 1750), 2nd edition, 1755, sectio XIV.

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